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century A.D. through a succession of three or four more monarchs after Skandagupta, and (iv) that the district officers (*vishayapatis*), under the provincial governors, themselves appointed directly by the imperial Gupta sovereigns, had an excellent administrative machinery at the head-quarters, viz. an Advisory Board representing the various important interests of those days. I may add that I have also dealt with some controversial subjects in Gupta history and tried to offer new suggestions for their solution which will be evident to the readers at their proper places in the book.

Then with regard to the next few chapters in which I have dealt with the post-Gupta kingdoms in North-Eastern India, limiting myself to the rise of the Pāla kings of Bengal, it may be submited that a new solution has been offered to the most vexed questions of the chronology of the Śailodbhava dynasty of Orissa and that of the early Lichchhavi kings of Nepal. In trying to establish my own theories on these two important chronologies I was compelled to refute the views of some of the most eminent writers on the subject with due deference to their vast erudition. A word of apology is necersary here for the lengthy treatment of the early history of Nepal in Chapter XI. I have felt that the history of this most interesting country was long neglected in India and excepting the admirable treatise of that great savant, M. Sylvain Lévi, no detailed narrative of the early history of Nepal, so far as I know, has been given in any work written in English (M. Sylvain Lévi's book, the *Le Népal*, being written in French). I have attempted

to construct a connected history of this kingdom in its very early days, by culling materials from the vast mass of its epigraphic records. I only regret that the summary of some of these records, which I have laid down in the body of the chapter itself, has not separately formed an appendix to it.

I have refrained from dealing separately and in detail with the history of king Harshavardhana, as the geographical area adopted for treatment in this work precludes its possibility, and it is already too well-known a topic. But most of the chief events in that monarch's life and career have been mentioned in the chapters on Śaśāṅka, the king of Bengal and the Kāmarūpa kings. Other minor contributions to the knowledge of historical truths may be marked here and there in the different chapters, e. g. the identification of king Susthitarvarman, mentioned in the Apshad inscriptiou of Ādityasena, with the Kāmarūpa king of that name and not with any imaginary king of the same name belonging to the Maukhari dynasty, and also the identification of king Devavarman of the Chinese records with King Devagupta of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. In Chapter VII I have endeavoured to adjudge properly the career of King Śaśāṅka and incorporate some new facts about him as obtained from a study of the Buddhist treatise, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. The chapter on the kingdom of Vaṅga-Samataṭa is entirely a new addition to the early history of Bengal written in a connected form.

I quite feel that I could neither make the book solely a political history, nor a cultural one, but to some extent it may be taken as a blending of both. It was

really not possible for me to treat the materials at my disposal for the particular period limited in this work, under separate headings, such as political, social, economic, religious, literary or otherwise, and to discuss fully all the cultural aspects of the people of North-Eastern India.

It may be stated here that the system of transliteration of Sanskrit and Prakrit words employed in this work is the one mostly adopted in the *Epigraphia Indica*. The abbreviations used in the references are too obvious to require any explanation.

In conclusion, I wish to record here a fact that the first inspiration and encouragement for attempting to undertake such works on ancient Indian history came to me from the illustrious trio, who founded the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi (in the old *Puṇḍravardhanabhukti*), I mean, my friend Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy of Dighāpātiyā, M.A., M.L.C., the late Mr. Akshaya Kumar Maitra, B.L., C.I.E., and Rai Rama Prasad Chanda Bahadur, B.A., to whom I take this opportunity to pay a tribute of high respects. My very hearty thanks are due to Mr. G. H. Langley, M.A., Vice-chancellor, Dacca University, and my erst-while colleague in that University, Dr. S. K. De, M.A., D.Litt., for the great interest they have taken in this work which, on account of their very insistent exhortation, was submitted as a thesis for the doctorate of the Dacca University. Another friend who cannot be forgotten in this connection is Mr. N. K. Bhattasali, M. A., who never failed to keep me cheerful by words of encouragement during moments of despair while gathering together stray

materials for this history. But the gratitude unde which my friend and colleague, Dr. Basanta Kuma Ray, M. A., Ph. D., of the Department of English o the Dacca University, has placed me is realy very deep, as he ungrudgingly read through the whole manuscript and suggested corrections and improve ments in the language which have been almos unhesitatingly adopted by me. Finally, I cannot le the opportunity here pass without making a thankful reference to my pupil, Mr. Sures Chandra Das M A. for his undertaking the responsibility of printing this book in his press. I am sorry that despite all attempts to avoid typographical errors, som have crept in and I beg to draw the kind attentio of my readers to the short list of corrections at the end of the book.

CALCUTTA,
December, 12, 1933.

Radhagovinda Basak.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Ancient India witnessed several forms of constitutional government monarchical, oligarchical, republican and tribal, working in different periods of her history, in different parts of the country. But the most prevailing form of Hindu constitution was monarchical. Generally speaking, in India, especially Northern India, there was a large number of small monarchical States which were ruled severally and independently by their own kings or chiefs, using such royal titles as *mahārāja*, *rājā*, *nṛpa* and the like, assisted by the necessary administrative machinery, viz., an assembly of ministers and a body of State-officers in the various departments. Whenever any such local ruler of a particular State, or any adventurer from a remote foregin land, having aspired, on account of the possession of adequate kingly virtues, to become a paramount suzerain—a *saṁrāṭ* or a *sārvva-bhauma* emperor—succeeded in asserting his overlordship justly and legitimately on the several conterminous and distant States,—that ruler or adventurer became the founder of some sort of an empire, keeping most of the kings and chiefs of the other States dependent on his imperial power either as feudal vassals, or through other kinds of political alliances. Such a great sovereign was generally the head of a great confederation of States having, however, reserved

for himself some provinces under his own direct rule and placed some others under that of his own viceroys or governors. As long as such an emperor could hold his own superior position intact, by means of his exceptional ability as the executive head of the administration, the smaller local States or provinces could easily be kept under his sway and subjection. But when through causes, internal or external, such an empire once began to decay, the numerous States that had once formed its component parts tried to recover their own independence.

During such period of decadence of an empire, unity disappears for the time being, dissension prevails and anarchy plays havoc. Disorder, chaos and confusion rule supreme, for, there remains no real *daṇḍa-dhara*, (wielder of *daṇḍa*) for controlling the independent States and saving the whole country from the evils and perils of distemper. Cohesive political relation amongst the different States may again arise, if and when, suzerainty or over-lordship can be enforced on them by a powerful ruler who can, as a veritable incarnation of kingly virtues of a high order, assume the title of an emperor and establish an empire by his supremacy. Such an anarchical period when, for the want of a proper *daṇḍadhara*, the weak are oppressed by the strong and a struggle for supremacy amongst the various local rulers ensues, is called by the Hindu authors of the *Arthaśāstras*, *Nīti-śāstras* (sciences and treatises on polity) and the *Smṛtis* (law-books) the period of *mātsyanyāya*[1] (a term of political

[1] Cf. अप्रणीतो हि मात्स्यन्यायमुद्भावयति। बलीयानबलं हि

philosophy expressing a state of anarchy, derived from the well-known natural phenomenon that large fish devour the small ones in water). It is a misnomer to call any period of history a blank, for, even then local powers exist and strive, as political rivals to attain a higher position, even that of a suzerain, if possible.

Such a course of disruption befell the great empire of the Mauryyas in the remote past. A similar condition awaited the Kushan empire some time later. From whatever cause or causes the fall of that empire might have taken place, a period of *mātsyanyāya* prevailed in Northern India, during which the kings or chiefs of the various local centres, e.g. Girinagara in Surāshṭra, Ujjayinī in Avantī, Vaiśālī in Videha, Pāṭaliputra in Magadha etc., must have entered into a struggle amongst themselves for supremacy and overlordship. The down-fall of the Kushan empire in Āryyāvarta (Northern India) synchronised with that of the Andhra empire in Dakshiṇāpatha (the Deccan). The disappearance of the rule of both these powerful dynasties from the stage of Indian history took place during the first half of the third century A.D. Then followed, except in the Punjab and the far North-West of India, a period of anarchy which continued for about

ग्रसते दण्डधराभावे ॥"

Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra, Bk. I, Chap. IV, p. 33. Trivandrum, Ed. 1924. Also compare—*Kām. Nīti*, Chap. II, v 40 ;—*Manu*, VII, 20 ; —*Rāmāyaṇa*, Ch. 67, v 31 of the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa.

The word *daṇḍa* may refer either to the royal sceptre or one of the four political expedients mentioned in ancient Indian political treatises.

one century, till all disorder settled down under the suzerain power of the Gupta monarchs, who succeeded in establishing a North Indian empire, which lasted in full glory for well-nigh two and a half centuries. During this long period—approximately from the first quarter of the fourth century A. D. to the second of the sixth,—the Gupta emperors had under their unrivalled sway almost the whole of Northern India. The kings ruling during this period are styled the imperial Gupta rulers to distinguish them from those kings with 'Gupta' appendage to their names, who in a somewhat later period continued to reign in a circumscribed area in Magadha and the neighbouring countries even after the next period of *mātsyanyāya*, which followed the dissolution of Harshavardhana's empire and almost till the rise of the Pāla kings of Bengal who enjoyed supreme power in North-Eastern India.

CHAPTER II

North-Eastern India under the Imperial Gupta Emperors Chandragupta I and Samudragupta

Inscriptional records show that the founder of the Gupta dynasty was a king named Gupta, who had the use of the title *mahārāja* only and that his son and successor, bearing the same title, was named Ghaṭotkacha. The late Dr. V. Smith's suggestion[1] that the name of the founder of the Gupta family was "Śrīgupta" and not simply "Gupta" is indefensible. Like the names of the other Gupta kings used in inscriptions and coins, this first king's name was also decorated with the honorific prefix, 'Śrī'. It cannot be ascertained whether Dr. Rapson's seal with the legend *Guttasya* (in mixed Sanskrit and Prakrit) belongs to *mahārāja* Gupta, but Dr. Hoernle's clay-seal,[2] with the legend "*śrīguptsya*" inscribed on it, appears to belong to this king. The king Śrīgupta, referred to by the Chinese pilgrim, I-tsing,[3] as the founder of a Buddhist temple with an endowment of twenty-four large villages for the benefit of Chinese pilgrims, and as reigning some five hundred years before his own time of travel (in India, 673-695 A.D.) can be identified with the founder of the Gupta dynasty,

[1] *J. A. B.*, Vol. LIII, Pt. 1, p. 119 and note.

[2] *J. R. A. S.* (1905), p. 814, plate 6, 23 and 1901, p. 99.

[3] *Ibid*, N. S. Vol. XIII (1882), p. 571, and *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XI, p. 110.

if we make some allowance for the pilgrim's calculation of the interval between his own time and king Gupta's, which is only conjecturally put as five hundred years. He may have hazarded such a statement on hearsay evidence only. Another important argument in favour of the identification of I-tsing's Śrīgupta with *mahārāja* Gupta, the founder of the Gupta dynasty, advanced by Mr. Allan[4], is that "the lands of the patron of the Chinese pilgrims must have lain within the Gupta territory, and it is unlikely that we should have had two different rulers in the same territory of the same name within so brief a period; had the Gupta mentioned by I-tsing been an ancestor of and not identical with Gupta, he must have appeared in some of the genealogical lists". Hence the two may be regarded as identical. However, from the use of the title, *mahārāja*, both by Gupta and Ghaṭotkacha, it appears that they were small kings of the feudatory type and were not paramount sovereigns. Pāṭaliputra in Magadha was most probably the political centre of their territory. It may be supposed with Mr. Allan[5] and probably rightly, that "the Gupta kingdom was probably one of many which rose to practical independence with the decline of Kushan power". Following the view of the late Dr. V. Smith and other scholars we may place the rule of *mahārāja* Gupta conjecturally between 275 and 300 A. D., and that of Ghaṭotkacha between 300 and 320 A. D. respectively. A seal bearing the legend

[4] Allan—*Catalogue of Indian Coins, Gupta Dynasties*, Introduction pp. XV—XVI.

[5] *Ibid*, Introduction p. XVI.

"*Śrī-Ghaṭotkachaguptasya*" inscribed on it, was discoverd at Vaiśālī (Basarh). The indentification of this Ghaṭotkachagupta with *mahārāja* Ghaṭotkacha of the Gupta dynasty—a view[6] advanced by the late Dr. Bloch and Dr. Smith, may be accepted as correct, specially on the consideration that the seal in question was discovered along with other seals belonging to the Gupta period, the most remarkable of them being the one belonging to the chief queen of Chandragupta II, viz. Mahādevī Dhruvasvāminī (undoubtedly the same as the queen named Dhruvadevī in the inscriptions), who was the mother of *mahārāja* Govindagupta. It cannot be stated with any degree of certainty whether the second Gupta ruler (Ghaṭotkacha) had any relation with Vaiśālī, the capital of the old clan of the Lichchhavis. His son and successor, Chandragupta I, who was the third king in the Gupta line, but the first *mahārājādhirāja* of the dynasty—married a Lichchhavi princess named Kumāradevī. It may be believed that Ghaṭotkacha, though a local king of Magadha ruling from Pāṭaliputra, might have, towards the close of his rule, become more powerful on account of the growing power of his worthy and accomplished son Chandragupta I, whose strong support must have helped the father to extend his own dominion by making a conquest of the northern State of Vaiśālī and to compel the Lichchhavi chief or chiefs to please him by entering into a *santāna-sandhi*[7]

6 *A. S. R.*—1903-4, p. 102 and *J. R. A. S.*, 1905, p. 153 ; Smith's *E. H. I*[3]. p. 280, note 1.

7 Cf. *Kām. Nīti*—Chap. IX, v. 6,—

"सन्तानसन्धिर्विज्ञेयो दारिकादानपूर्वकः ।"

(a kind of treaty of peace by the present of a maiden to a victor), by which the hand of Kumāradevī was probably won for his own son. So it appears that the expansion of the kingdom of Magadha was to a very large extent due to the general weakening of the power of the Lichchhavis. An alternative theory may be advanced that after the death of Ghaṭotkacha, Chandragupta I himself, most powerful and rising as he was, began to extend his ancestral kingdom of Pāṭaliputra, and just as his renowned son and successor Samudragupta is known from his own record to have gained the services of the kings of different States by various conciliatory methods, one amongst which was *kanyopāyana*[8] ('presentation of a daughter'), so also it is not improbable that his father Chandragupta I, should have, in course of his conquests, pushed his arms first of all into the neighbouring northern State of Vaiśālī and caused one of the Lichchhavi chiefs to offer him the hand of the princess Kumāradevī. Matrimonial alliances between royal families for political purposes have been prevalent in all times in all countries, specially in India. In a still earlier period of Indian history we find an instance of such an alliance ratifying the incorporation of a country into an empire. Nāganikā[9], the queen of the third Andhra king Śātakarṇi was a Mahārathi princess, that is, a daughter of a king of the Rāshṭrikas. This marriage is regarded by scholars as a convenient way of extension of the Andhra empire upto the valley of

[8] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, No. 1, L. 24.

[9] *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 530-31.

the Godāvarī (Nasik district). The marriage of Prabhāvatī, daughter of Chandragupta II and his second wife Kuveranāgā, with Rudrasena II, the Vākāṭaka king of the Deccan, is another instance of a similar matrimonial alliance[10]. In a later period of Indian history we find several instances of political marriages. Karṇa of Chedi was obliged to make peace with Vigrahapāla III, king of Gauḍa, by marrying his daughter Yauvanaśrī[11] to his victorious enemy. Jātavarman, the powerful Varman king of East Bengal, who, we learn[12] from the Belava copper-plate inscription of Bhojavarman, began to spread his arms of conquest for securing overlordship, was pacified by the same Chedi King by the marriage with him of another daughter of his, named Vīraśrī. Other such alliances will be referred to in some of the subsequent chapters of this work.

The late Dr. V. Smith's theory[13] that Chandragupta I, "by means of his matrimonial alliance" with the Lichchhavis, "succeeded to the power held by his wife's relatives", who, he thinks, "were masters of the ancient imperial city", Pāṭaliputra, cannot be accepted without some reservation. We have no evidence to show whether in the third century A. D. and during the first quarter of the fourth, the Lichchhavis were in occupation of Pāṭaliputra, as well as their ancestral territory of Vaiśālī, or only of Pāṭa-

10 Fleet—*C. I. I*, No. 55, p. 237.

11 Sandhyākaranandin's *Rāmacharita* (*Memoirs of the A. S. B.*) Chap. I. V. 9.

12 *Vide* the author's paper in the *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XII, No. 8.

13 V. A. Smith—*E. H. I*[3]., p. 279.

liputra. We only know from one[14] of the Nepal inscriptions (No. 15) that king Supushpa of the Lichchhavi family was born in Pushpapura (i.e. Pāṭaliputra) but he belonged to a period long before the Christian era according to the calculation of time of the events mentioned in that Nepal record. In any case there is no denying the fact that this matrimonial union of the two families was a great political achievement on the part of Chandragupta I, and it might have enabled him to extend his conquests and raise himself from the old position of a local *mahārāja* to the rank of a lord-paramount, a *mahārājādhirāja* and thus to lay the foundation of a mighty empire in Northern India.

Chandragupta I

(c. I.—16 G. E.=c. 319-335 A. D.)

Mr. Allan thinks that in order to commemorate the famous union of the Guptas with the Lichchhavis treated above, it was Chandragupta I's son and successor, Samudragupta [1], who issued a type of coins which bore on the obverse the figures of his father and mother, Kumāradevī,—along with their names, and on the reverse the figure of Lakshmī seated on a lion, with the legend *Lichchhavayaḥ*. But following the late Dr. V. Smith[2] we may presume that it was

14 *I. A.* Vol. IX 1880, p. 178.

1 Allan—*Cat. of Gupta coins*—Introduction, p. XVIII, § 14.

2 V. Smith—*E. H. I*[3]. p. 280.

probably Chandragupta I himself, and not his son, who struck such coins out of a sense of pleasant gratitude that his own power was much augmented by this matrimonial relation with the Lichchhavis. We do not concur with Mr. Allan's view[3] that these Gupta coins could not possibly be "a local development, in Magadha, of the late Kushan coins from which they are obviously derived"; but we think, as will be shown below, that the period "when the Guptas came into closer contact with the late Great Kushanas whose eastern (Punjab) coinage they copy" may have belonged to as early a time of the Gupta history as the reign of Chandragupta I, who had spread his arms of conquest to the distant countries of the West and North West frontiers washed by the Indus.

After his accesssion Chandragupta I began to extend his dominion by means of fresh conquests. Although we are not in possession of any definite inscriptional literature for supplying us with details of the extent of his conquests, we can ascertain from a reference to his son Samudragupta's campaigns of conquests as described in the Allahabad pillar inscription that Chandragupta I ruled over the whole of the Gangetic valley from Prayāga (Allahabad) to Pāṭaliputra in Magadha including Sāketa (Oudh). In discussing the date of the compilation of the dynastic accounts in the Puraṇās Mr. Pargiter[4] thus writes—" the Guptas

3 Allan—*Cat. of Gupta coins*—Introduction, pp. LXV—LXVI.

4 Pargiter—*Dynasties of the Kali Age*—Introduction, p. XII, § 20.

are mentioned as reigning over the country comprised within Prayāga, Sāketa (Ayodhyā), and Magadha, that is exactly the territory which was possessed at his death by Chandragupta I, who founded the Gupta dynasty in A. D. 319-20 and reigned till 326 or 330 (or even till 335 perhaps), before it was extended by the conquests of his son and successor Samudragupta"; and that scholar also holds the view that as the Paurāṇic account does not take any notice of Samudragupta's conquests, nor of the Gupta empire, the narrative was closed during the interval which elapsed between the time when Chandragupta I established his kingdom from Magadha over Tirhut, Bihar and Oudh as far as Allahabad and the beginning of Samudragupta's reign. But there is reason to believe that this account[5] of the Purāṇas with regard to the extent of the Gupta dominions had been compiled before Chandragupta I made other glorious conquests (to be dealt with below) which probably took place towards the latter part of his reign. It may be presumed that the province of Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) was also brought under the rule of Chandragupta I, for had the conquest of this province fallen to the lot of his son, Samudragupta, that event should certainly have found mention in his famous Allahabad record. It will not probably be correct to hold that North Bengal during this period formed directly a

[5] Cf. *Vishṇupurāṇa*—Bk. IV Chap. 24—"अनुगङ्गा प्रयागं मागधा गुप्ताश्च भोक्ष्यन्ति ।" and also *Vāyupurāṇa* Chap. 99—"अनुगङ्गा प्रयागं च साकेतं मगधांस्तथा । एतान् जनपदान् सर्व्वान् भोक्ष्यन्ते गुप्तवंशजाः ॥"
Also cf. V. Smith—*I. A.* 1902, p. 258, note.

part of Magadha, and was ruled by the central government from Pāṭaliputra, but it was very likely placed under the charge of a governor appointed by the imperial monarch. This may seem to be evident from the records of the Gupta rulers in a later period.

It has been shown elsewhere[6] in detail why we should identify the Chandra of the Meharauli Iron pillar inscription,[7] written in North Indian script of the fourth century of the Christian era, with the Gupta emperor Chandragupta I. A few remarks may be offered here by way of refuting the view of the late Mm. H. P. Śāstri which was accepted by the late Dr. V. Smith[8] and which Professor R. C. Majumdar[9] of the Dacca University also feels inclined to accept, that this Chandra was not a ruler of the Gupta dynasty and that he should be identified with king Chandravarman mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta. Mm. H. P. Śāstri based his arguments, in favour of this identification, on two inscriptions, viz., the Mandasor Stone-inscription[10] of Naravarman of the year 461 of the Mālava era (=404 A. D.) and the Susunia Hill inscription[11] of Chandravarman. It may be mentioned that in the first inscription king (*pārthiva*) Naravarman uses with his name the title *mahārāja* and in the second,

6 The writer's paper—published in *Ind. Ant.*—1919, pp. 98-101.

7 Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 32.

8 V. A. Smith—*E. H. I*3., p. 290, foot-note 1.

9 R. C. Majumdar—"*The Early History of Bengal*", published by the University of Dacca, 1924.

10 *Epi. Ind.*—Vol. XIII, No. 35.

11 *Ibid*—Vol. XII, No. 9.

Chandrvarman also does the same. In the one, *mahārāja* Naravarman is described as the son of king Siṁhavarman and in the other *mahārāja* Chandravarman is mentioned as the son of the same king, attached to whose name we find another epithet *Pushkaraṇādhipati* which means that king Siṁhavarman was the ruler of Pushkaraṇa (probably, Pokaran in the Jodhpur State of Rājputana). In Samudragupta's Allahabad inscription there is mention of a king named Chandravarman as one of the several kings of Āryyāvarta (Northern India) who were violently extirpated by that Gupta monarch during his campaign of conquests. Naravarman appears to have ruled as a feudatory king in Western Mālwā in 404 A. D. i.e. during the reign of Chandragupta II, son of Samudragupta. Hence the supposition is inevitable that Chandravarman was an elder brother of Naravarman. The identity of the Chandravarman of the Susunia Hill inscription as established by Pandit Śāstrī is quite correct, but there will be very great difficulties in proving conclusively that this Chandravarman and the Chandra of the Iron Pillar are identical. Let us now consider the following historical data supplied by the Meharauli inscription:—(i) King Chandra extirpated in battle in the Vaṅga countries (East and South Bengal) his enemies who offered him a united resistance and thereby he achieved fame; (ii) he, in course of war, crossed the seven mouths of the Indus (Sindhu) and overcame the Vāhlikas [12]

[12] It may be suggested that the Vālhikas were the same as the Bāhīkas (the country of the Bāhīka people who had their capital in Śākala, Sialkot in the Punjab). Cf. Prof. S. N. Majumdar's

(probably, some people of foreign origin in the upper Punjab); (iii) the Southern Ocean was "even to-day" (i.e. at the time of incision of the epigraph) "being perfumed by the breezes of his prowess" i.e. he, probably, proceeded also towards the South for making conquests; (iv) his majestic glory still lingered on earth in the shape of fame even after his death;[13] (v) he enjoyed for a long time (*suchiraṁ*) lord-paramountcy (*aikādhirājyaṁ*) on earth, earned by the strength of his own arms (*svabhujārjjitaṁ*) i.e. he was justified in calling himself a *mahārājādhirājā*, a title which he himself earned by his own prowess; and (vi) he was a Vaishṇava and raised this pillar as a flag-staff (*dhvaja*) in honour of the god Vishṇu on the Vishṇupada hill.

From these data we find that king Chandra was a mighty monarch who acquired the title of *mahārāj-ādhirāja* (expressed for metrical exigencies as *aikādhirājyaṁ prāpta* in line 5 of the inscription), whereas Chandravarman is simply mentioned in the Susunia inscription with the title, *mahārāja* which during the Gupta period of Indian history and even

note on pp. 686-87 of the new edition of Cunningham's "*Ancient Geography* of *India*", published by Chukervertty, Chatterjee & Co., Calcutta, 1924. Varāhamihira mentions Vāhlikas as one of the northern peoples. Mr. Allan (*Cat. of Gupta Coins*—Introduction, p. XXXVI) thinks it "probable that the name Vāhlika had acquired a more general significance and used like Pahlavas, Yavana, &c., of a body of foreign invaders of India", and therefore it may not have any reference to the people of Bālkh.

13 This datum indicates clearly that the inscription was a posthumous one and was probably got incised by the order of a successor of king Chandra.

earlier, was used by kings of small States and by feudatory rulers. The fifth datum noted above is very significant. The statement that Chandra earned sureme overlordship on earth by means of his own prowess and enjoyed it for a long time and that he led his arms of conquest to the distant countries (Vaṇga) in the east and those washed by the Indus on the west and also towards the south, applied more to an early Gupta ruler of the fourth century A. D. than to any local king of any of the smaller States then ruling independently in Northern India. There is no Pourāṇic or epigraphic evidence to show that any other family of kings made any attempt in the fourth century to assume imperial dignity by conquering distant countries. So the inevitable conclusion that forces itself upon us is that it was Samudragupta's father, Chandragupta I, the first *mahārājādhirāja* of the Gupta line of emperors, who began to establish the empire by marching out for achieving conquests in Eastern and southern Bengal, in portions of the Punjab through Sind, and also towards the south. It cannot, however, be stated with any degree of certainty how far Chandragupta I succeeded in incorporating these conquered provinces into his own central kingdom or in entering into any kind of political relation with their rulers or chiefs.

It seems quite probable that Samudragupta ordered this epigraph to be incised on this very costly pillar of wrought iron which his late father Chandragupta I had caused to be erected as a flag-staff in honour of Vishṇu; and as the ancestors of his father were local chiefs (*mahārājas*), the emperor did not perhaps

command the court-poet to refer to any pedigree in the inscription. To prove completely that king Chandravarman and the Chandra of the Iron pillar are indentical, one must establish, first of all, that Chandravarman came to Vaṅga (East and South Bengal) "on a campaign of conquests". The Susunia inscription offers not the slightest hint of any such conquest. It simply states that the dedication of the wheel on the back-wall of the cave (just below which the inscription is engraved) was a pious "deed (*kīrttiḥ*) of *mahārāja* Chandravarman, son of *mahārāja* Siṁhavarman, king of Pushkaraṇa". It does not say "that Chandra of Pokarna *did conquer* that part of the country" as asserted somewhat unwarrantedly by Pandit Śāstrī. The Susunia hill is situated in Rāḍhā or Suṁha (West Bengal), while King Chandra came to Vaṅga (East and part of South Bengal). Mr. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali[14], Curator of the Dacca Museum, has lately lent some force to the opinion of Mm. H. P. Śāstrī by pointing out a solitary reference to one Chandravarman whose *koṭa* or fort formed a boundary of a land, granted to a Brāhman by a king of the sixth century A.D. somewhere near Koṭālipāḍā in the district of Faridpur. This view again of Mr. Bhattasali led our friend Dr. R. C. Majumdar to think that Chandravarman of Pushkaraṇa subjugated Bengal and ruled over it for some time. But no mention whatever is found in the Faridpur inscription that Chandravarman was a king of Bengal at all. On the other hand, it can be easily presumed that Chandravar-

[14] *Dacca Review*—Vol. X, 1920—21, Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5.

man might have gone to the Susunia Hill on a pilgrimage to the hill-cave to do honour in person to the god Chakrasvāmin and that it was probably a very famous place of pilgrimage in old days. It may be advanced as an argument that as the wheel in the Susunia hill-cave and the flag-staff, viz. the Iron pillar, are both sacred to the god Vishṇu, it favours the identity of Chandravarman and Chandra. But were not the Gupta emperors themselves devotees of Vishṇu or Bhagavān (*paramabhāgavatas*)? Hence we are still inclined to believe with the late Dr. Fleet that the Chandra of the Iron pillar is the first Gupta *mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta I, and this accounts for the striking palaeographical similarity of this inscription with the Allahabad pillar inscription of his son Samudragupta.

The first year of this monarch's reign, reckoned very likely from his assumption of the title of *mahārājādhirāja* after he had already extended to some extent his ancestral kingdom, was 319-20 A. D., and the era known to historians as "the Gupta era", used in inscriptional and numismatic records in many parts of Northern India during the next few centuries, began from this date. It may be assumed that some conquests had been made by Chandragupta I before this date, and that he might have ruled simply as a *mahārāja* for a few years after his father *mahārāja* Ghaṭotkacha's death, and that the ceremony for the celebration of his accession to the high office of *aikādhirājya* or the status of a *mahārājādhirāja* occurred in 319-20 A. D. whence his regnal year commenced to be counted.

Samudragupta-Parākramāṅka

(c. 16-61 G. E.=c. 335-380 A. D.)

Chandragupta I was succeeded by his son Samudragupta, who, it is clear from an epigraph of the latter's reign, does not appear to have been the eldest son. He was selected by his father for the Crown-princeship. The events of the reign of this great Gupta ruler can only be known from a study of two inscriptions of his reign and the different types of his coins. The most famous of all documents of the Gupta period of Indian history, possessing historical value, is the Allahabad Pillar inscription[1] of Samudragupta. This inscription is engraved on a round monolith sand-stone pillar, which also contains a set of edicts caused to be incised by the imperial command of the Mauryya emperor Aśoka in the third century B. C. Inspite of the ravages perpetrated by time and men, the pillar has preserved many passages of historical and geographical importance regarding the reign of Samudragupta.

It is an historical document of the *praśasti* type, forming a panegyric discourse on the *avadānas* or heroic achievements of the Gupta emperor Samudragupta, whose conquests in various quarters are so vividly described in it by his court-poet Harisheṇa, who calls himself the son of *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Dhruvabhūti. He belonged to a place called Khādya-

[1] Fleet *C. I. I.*, No. 1.

ṭapāka and had himself the right to use the three high titles of *sāndhi-vigrahika* (minister of Peace and War i.e. Foreign minister), *kumārāmātya* (either a minister to the princes, or himself a minister by right of birth), and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* (the chief administrator of *daṇḍa*, justice)." It may be noted here that this pillar-inscription is not a posthumous record as was long supposed by some scholars including the late Dr Fleet. *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Tilabhaṭṭaka was the person who got the *praśasti* executed.

In order to get a comprehensive idea of this mighty monarch's military achievements, it is necessary that we should give here a summary of the contents of this invaluable epigraph. It is a contemporary record of the aggressive campaign of conquests undertaken by Samudragupta and of his personal accomplishments. Geographically this campaign may be described under four heads,—(i) as led against the numerous kings of the South (Dakshiṇāpatha), (ii) against the kings of some States in the North (Āryyāvarta), (iii) against the chiefs of some of the forest kingdoms (*āṭavikarājas*) and (iv) against some of the unorthodox frontier rulers (*pratyanta-nṛpatis*) and the republican communities. One verse (v. 4) in this inscription most graphically, though in an epigrammatic way, describes the manner in which Samudragupta was ordained by his father Chandragupta I to be his successor, as being the best fitted amongst all other princes to rule the earth,—his choice having been decided in a ceremonious meeting wherein all members were anxiously breathing forth deep sighs to see the prince on whom

the royal selection should fall, and all the other royal claimants were waiting to cast jealous looks of disappointment on the person selected. The emperor embraced his worthy son Samudragupta, and made him the Crown-prince. It is very probable that he was not the eldest son of Chandragupta I, and it is clear that the law of primogeniture was not in operation during this period. Another most interesting touch by the poet-laureate in the picture of the triumphant expeditions of this aggressor is found in his description of the charming person of Samudragupta, disfigured, rather "beautified," as the poet would have it, by "the blows of battle-axes, arrows, spears, pikes, barbed darts, swords, lances, javelines, iron arrows" and many other weapons, which caused marks of innumerable wounds, when this Parākramāṅka (Samudragupta) engaged himself in battle with his own strength and prowess as his only ally.

The Gupta emperor's military expedition may be described as follows. In a half-mutilated verse (v. 5) some opponents are stated to have submitted to him and asked for shelter (*śaraṇam = upāgatāḥ*) after having been afflicted by his prowess ; and in the next verse it is hinted that some of his great wrong-doers (*uchchāpakārāḥ*) were defeated by the king's own hands in battle (*saṁgrāmeshu svabhuja-vijitāḥ*) and that after expressing repentance for their wrong-doing they became the monarch's friends. It is recorded in another verse (v. 7) that Achyuta and Nāgasena were completely overthrown and that a descendant of the Kota family was made a captive by the soldiers of the emperor. The poet-laureate

then refers to the aggressive deeds of the emperor, who engaged himself in many battles of various kinds, for winning glory by a victory over the entire earth (*sarva-pṛthivī-vijaya*). Lines 19—20, written in excellent Sanskrit prose, record the defeat courted by the kings of the numerous States in the Deccan, viz. (1) Mahendra of Kosala, (2) Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntāra, (3) Manṭarāja of Korāla or Kurāla, (4) Mahendra of Pishṭapura, (5) Svāmidatta of Giri-Koṭṭūra, (6) Damana of Eraṇḍapalla, (7) Vishṇugopa of Kāñchī, (8) Nīlarāja of Avamukta, (9) Hastivarman of Veṅgī, (10) Ugrasena of Pālakka, (11) Kuvera of Devarāshṭra, (12) Dhananjaya of Kusthalapura and others. Harisheṇa here speaks of Samudragupta as having attained "a great good fortune, mixed with majestic glory," by his first capturing these kings of the South and then favouring them with a release (*grahaṇa-moksh-ānugraha-janita-pratāpa*) This military progress through the Southern States was undoubtedly made at the final stage of the expedition. Lines 20-21 describe the emperor as having added to his majesty by a violent extirpation of a number of kings in Northern India (Āryyavarta), viz. (1) Rudradeva, (2) Matila, (3) Nāgadatta, (4) Chandravarman, (5) Gaṇapatināga, (6) Nāgasena, (7) Achyutanandin[2], (8) Balavarmaṇ and many others, whose territories, however, are not mentioned in the inscription. They perhaps ruled independently over

2 Some scholars divide the word as Achyuta and Nandin, making them stand for two different persons, but *Nandin* seems to have been a surname. The name was probably used without the surname in V. 7 (Ll. 13—14) to meet the exigencies of metre.

some of the well-known neighbouring provinces and States of Northern India, such as Pushkaraṇa, Aṅga, Avanti, Anūpa, Śūrasena etc. existing from before Samudragupta's time, as we infer from Kālidāsa's mention of them in his great epic, the *Raghuvaṁśa*. There is hardly any doubt that those kings, at least those whose States were allowed to continue as separate States and were not brought by annexation under the direct jurisdiction of the central government, were forced to became feudatories of the Gupta monarch after their defeat. Some of these kingdoms were most probably incorporated in the Gupta empire. In all probability Samudragupta first turned his attention to the subjugation of these Nothern kings before proceeding toward the South.

The inscription then describes the emperor as turning towards the forest kings, perhaps of modern Central India, and bringing them under his power (*paricharakīkṛta-sarvāṭavika-rāja*). In lines 22-23 it is mentioned that some of the neighbouring kings of the *pratyanta*[3] (frontier ?) countries of the North and the North-East, viz. (1) Samataṭa, (2) Ḍavāka, (3) Kāmarūpa, (4) Nepāla, (5) Kartṛpura etc. and some of the republican communities of the West and South-West, viz. (1) the Mālavas, (2) the Ārjunāyanas, (3) the Yaudheyas, (4) the Madrakas, (5) the Ābhīras, (6) the Prārjunas, (7) the Sanakānikas, (8) the Kākas, (9) the Kharaparikas and others, gratified the monarch by payment of all kinds of tribute (*sarva-kara-dāna*),

[3] Cf. Amarakosha—"प्रत्यन्तो म्लेच्छदेशः स्यात्" i. e. those counntries were called *pratyantas* which did not abide by the orthodox rules regarding the *varṇas* and the *āśramas*.

by obedience to his commands *(ājñākaraṇa)* and by approach for paying court to the monarch *(praṇāmā-gamana)*. Lines 23-24 mention some of the distant rulers, the representatives of the various races of foreign origin *viz.* the Śaka-Muruṇḍas, who called themselves Daivaputrakas and Shāhis and Shāhānushāhis, the people of Ceylon and the inhabitants of all other islands *(Saiṁhalakādibhiś=cha sarva-dvīpa-vāsibhiḥ)*, as rendering the Gupta monarch service, by means of self-surrender *(ātmanivedana)*, presents of maiden-princes *(kanyopāyana)*, payment of tribute or gifts *(dāna)* and request for the issue of the royal charter marked with the Garuḍa symbol which guaranteed their enjoyment of their own territories *(garutmad-aṅka-svavishaya-bhukti-śāsana-yāchana)*. The emperor is also described in line 23 as having won fame by re-establishing many royal families previously fallen and deprived of their kingdoms *(aneka-bhrashṭa-rājyotsanna-rāja-vaṁśa-pratishṭhāpana)*; and he is also said to have appointed his own State-officers *(āyukta-purushas)* to restore the wealth of various kings who were conquered by the strength of his own arms *(svabhujabala-vijit-āneka-narapati-vibhava-pratyarpaṇa)*.

From the above details it appears to be very plain that there were differences in the nature of conquests and invasions made by the mighty Gupta emperor. Firstly, there was violent extermination of some kings of Northern India and permanent annexation of their kingdoms to the victor's own dominions. Secondly, there was liberation after capture of some of the kings of Southern India and re-instatement

of these kings in their own kingdoms. Thirdly, there was acceptance of some sort of service, monetary or personal, rendered by some of the kings of the neighbouring (*pratyanta*) countries, by some of the tribal republics, as also by some distant foreign powers, who, it appears, were all allowed to enjoy autonomy by acknowledging the sovereignty of the Gupta emperor. Fourthly, there was renewal of old administration of some ruined royal families that had been deprived of their power, perhaps, by former emperors. Fifthly and lastly, there was restoration of wealth to many kings who were conquered by the emperor himself.

It will not be out of place here to add a note on the identification of the names of places, kings and peoples mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription. The States of the Deccan were:—(1) Kosala,—this is South Kosala in the Mahānadī valley, comprising parts of the modern districts of Jabbalpur, Raipur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur. (2) Mahākāntāra,—this seems to be one of the Southern forest countries which constitute the tributary States of Orissa and the back-ward tracts of the Central Provinces. Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri[4] identifies this wild tract with the Jaso State. (3) Korāla or Kurāla,—this is perhaps the district round the modern lake Kolleru. Dr. Ray Chaudhury identifies it with Kerala which, he thinks, was "the district of which the capital in later times was Yayātinagara on the Mahānadī." (4) Pishṭapura,—this is certainly Piṭhāpuram in the Godāvarī district, the ancient capital

[4] Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri—*Political History of Ancient India* pp. 275-76.

ot Kaliṅga. (5) Giri-Koṭṭūra,—this Koṭṭūra has been identified with Kothoor, 12 miles S. S. W. of the *giri* (hill) i.e. Mahendragiri in the Ganja ı district. It is doubtful if Svāmidatta was to be taken as the ruler of two places viz. Pishṭapura and Mahendragiri-Koṭṭūra. The name [5] of the king of the former place seems, to have been Mahendra and that of Giri-Koṭṭūra was Svāmidatta. The last three States were situated within the boundaries of old Kaliṅga. (6) Eraṇḍapalla,—Professor Dubreuil[6] is of opinion that Samudragupta's military operations in the Deccan were confined only to the eastern parts of the country. Só he thinks that the identification of this place with Erandol in Khandesh is wrong. In the opinion of this scholar Samudrapupta did not turn west-ward, neither did he come home through Khandesh and the Mahāraṭṭa country. He identifies it with Eraṇḍapali, "a town probably near Chicacole". (7) Kāñchī,—this is undoubtedly Conjeevaram S. W. of Madras; hence, Vishṇugopa was a Pallava king. (8) Avamukta,—this has not yet been properly identified. (9) Veṅgī,—this is a place in the Kṛshṇā district, situated between the eastern portion of the Godāvarī and the Kṛshṇā. (10) Pālakka,—this is a place probably in the Nellore district—identified with Pallakada—the seat of a viceroyalty under the Pallava kings. (11) Devarāshṭra,—according to Professor Dubreuil it would be wrong to take it to refer to any place in Mahārāshṭra

[5] The clauses in this view are to be separated thus:—
[पैष्टपुरक]—महेन्द्र—[गिरिकोट्टूरक]—स्वामिदत्त॰

[6] Dubreuil—*Ancient History of the Deccan*—pp. 58-61.

in the western part of the Deccan; hence he thinks that this place is the tract Yallamanchili in the district of Vizagapatam. (12) Kusthalapura,—this place still remains unidentified.

As regards the identification of the northern States conquered by the Gupta emperor it may be noted that the kingdom of Rudradeva is yet unknown. King Matila is said to be identical with Mattila whose name occurs in a seal found in Bulandshahr. Nāgadatta may not have been a member of any of the Nāga dynasties referred to in the Purāṇas, which ruled "in the Jumna valley and Central India in the fourth century A. D." In the Gupta and post-Gupta period of Indian history we find different surnames, such as *datta, sena, varman, nandin, nāga, etc.* So we do not feel inclined to take Nāgadatta for a king of any of the Nāga States such as were ruled by Gaṇapatināga himself. As has been shown before, Chandravarman of this inscription may rightly be indentified with the king of Pushkaraṇa, modern Pokharan, in Rājputana, who is mentioned as *mahārāja* Chandravarman, son of *mahārāja* Siṁhavarman. So he belongs to that family of Varman kings of western Mālava of which Naravarman (461 M. E.), Viśvavarman (480 M. E.) and Bandhuvarman (493 M. E.) were members, some of whom ruled afterwards from Daśapura. We have shown elsewhere[7] that like his father Siṁhavarman and his grand-father Jayavarman before him, Chandravarman also might have ruled independently, before the Gupta conqueror advanced towards Mālava, and

[7] *I. A.* 1918, p. 99.

reduced the power of this Varman family of Push-karaṇa by defeating him. It is not unlikely that Chandravarman, the elder brother, was driven away from Malava and proceeded towards the east. This may explain in a way why he came to the Susunia Hill (in the Bankura District). His younger brother Nara-varman might also have been raised to the position of a Gupta feudatory ruling from Daśapura (modern Mandasor). Gaṇapatināga was undoubtedly a king of the Nāga dynasty, many of whose coins have been discovered. One cannot be sure that he was a prince ruling from Padmāvatī (Narwar in Scindia's territory). The Nāga families ruled from more than one place viz. Padmāvatī, Mathurā and Vidiśā[3]. But we may easily concur with the view of Professor Rapson who has identified Nāgasena of this inscription with the Nāgasena of the Nāgakula ruling from Padmāvatī, mentioned in Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*[4]. We should not make two *Nāga* kings of the same family rule simultaneously from one place (Padmāvatī). In this inscription we read *Achyuta* and *Nandin* together. We do not accept the view that Nandin is the name of a person. It may be treated as a surname here. This Achyuta was very likely the king of that name repre-sented only by the syllables "*achyu*" in a large number of coins found in Ahichchhatrā in U. P. We cannot be very sure that the kingdom of Balavarman men-tioned in this *praśasti* was Kāmarūpa. One Balavarman is the son of Samudravarman, whom we have shown

3 Pargiter, *Kali Age*, p. 49.

4 *Harshacharita*—Chapter VI. p. 90 (Kane's ed., pt. III.)

in a separate chapter to have been a contemporary of Samudragupta himself. Probably this Balavarman of the Allahabad pillar has nothing to do with Kāmarūpa, as it has been separately mentioned as one of the *pratyanta* kingdoms which entered into subordinate alliance with the Gupta monarch. So in all probability, this Balavarman was a king of some country other than Kāmarūpa.

Regarding the identification of the *pratyanta* (or the so-called frontier) provinces and the republics referred to in the *praśasti*, it may be observed that Samataṭa stood for nearly the whole of the delta of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra including parts of the modern districts of Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Eastern part of Dacca and Tippera. Kāmarūpa is more or less represented by modern Assam. Ḍavāka has not yet been properly identified. Coming between Samataṭa and Kāmarūpa in the list, it may have corresponded to the northern part of Dacca and almost the whole of the Mymensingh district. We have pointed out in our paper on the Damodarpur plates that Ḍavāka should not be identified with portions of Bogra, Dinajpur and Rajshahi districts of North Bengal, which must have formed part of the *vishaya* of Koṭivarsha in the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana. The kingdom of Nepāla is the well-known geographical unit forming the mountainous country north of old Magadha, Tīrabhukti, Ayodhyā etc. The kingdom of Kartṛpura may have comprised the territories of the Katuria Rāj of Kumaon, Garhwāl and Rohilkhand, and also the Kangra and Jalandhar districts.

Of the tribal republics mentioned in the *praśasti*, Mr. Allan[10] says that "to the north-west were the Yaudheyas and Madrakas in the Punjab, with the Mālavas, Ārjunāyanas, and Ābhīras to the South of them". He writes, moreover, that "the lands of the Prārjunas, Sanakānikas, Kākas and Kharaparikas lay to the South, probably in Mālwā and the Central Provinces". It may be added here that the Mālava tribe was at first in the Punjab and later they proceeded towards Rājputana in the Western Mālava portion. Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhury[11] has pointed out that "a clue to the locality of the Yaudheyas is given by the Bijaygadha inscription (Fleet, *C. I. I.*, No. 58, p. 251)" which lies in the Bharatpur State. Śākala or Sialkot in the Punjab was the capital of the Madraka tribe. Dr. Ray Chaudhury has drawn the attention of scholars to the Ābhīras having occupied the tract near Vinaśana (the river Sarasvatī). The situation of the Sanakānikas may be known from a reference to a tribal chief mentioned in the Udayagiri cave inscription of Chandragupta II dated 401-2 A. D. This Udayagiri is a well-known hill near Bhilsa in the dominions of the Scindia in Central India.

Dr. Ray Chaudhury thinks that the Vākāṭaka prince Pṛthivīsheṇa I (father of Rudrasena II, a contemporary of Chandragupta II) was Samudragupta's contemporary, and had a predominant sway over the region between Bundelkhand and Karṇāṭa. He

10 *Gupta Coins*, Introduction pp. XXIV.

11 *Political History of Ancient India* pp. 279—80.

holds the view, moreover, that though Samudragupta did not invade the Western Deccan he deprived the Vākāṭakas of their possessions in Central India which were ruled by their vassal kings, one of whom was the Vyāghradeva of the Nachne-ki-talai inscription. He identifies this Vyāghradeva with the Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntāra in the Allahabad *praśasti* who, as feudatory of Pṛthivīsheṇa, was subdued by Samudragupta. Henceforward the Vākāṭaka power became extinct in Central India and it remained a purely Southern power. Thus Central India came under the Magadha empire. The enemies referred to in verse 6 of the Eran (Airikiṇa) inscription (Fleet No. 2) of Samudragupta, who are described as having been 'terrified' by the thought of the heroic deeds in battle of that Gupta monarch, probably alluded to the Vākāṭaka feudatories.

The foreign king, Daivaputra-Shāhi-Shahanushahi, who entered into diplomatic relations with Samudragupta, was the Kushan ruler of the north-west, and Dr. Ray Chaudhury takes him to be a descendant of the great Kaṇishka. In his opinion the Kshatrapas of Ujjain were meant by the foreign powers under the name Śaka-Muruṇḍas[12] (Muruṇḍa, a Śaka word = lord, Sk. *svāmin*). It is known from a Chinese source that the contemporary king of the Ceylonese (*Saiṁhalakas*) was named Meghavarṇa who, it is said, sent an

12. Cf. Fn. 1, p. 149 of V. Smith's *Oxford History of India*. It may be noted here with advantage that the latest article by Dr. Sten Konow on "Kalawan copper-plate Inscription of the year 134" in *J. R. A. S.*, Pt. IV, 1932, pp. 949 ff., has thrown a flood of new light on the question of the various Śaka eras and the Śaka

embassy with presents to the Magadhan Gupta for seeking permission to found a monastery near the Bodhi-tree in Gayā, for the use of pilgrims from Ceylon.

Sumadragupta performed the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, which was long in abeyance, undoubtedly after the completion of his round of conquests.

That Samudragupta was a king of highly exceptional ability, possessing varied gifts, can be believed, even if one refuses to accept without some reservation the courtly phrases of the poet-laureate Harisheṇa. The image of the emperor, seated as a lyrist on some of his gold coins, bears testimony to the description of the panegyrist that the monarch was a skilful master in the science of music and could by his performances "put to shame the heavenly musicians Tumburu and Nārada". He possessed a very sharp and polished intellect by which he could even "surpass Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of the gods". He is also said to have been himself a poet of no mean order, for he obtained the title of *Kavirāja* ('king of poets'), by his poetical compositions from which even learned people drew much inspiration. He was a patron of the Muses. On account of his good nature his people were always ready to show extreme loyalty to his person and throne and he was very compassionate towards all. His mind was always busy with the

invasion of India which "started from Seistan to Sindh, and thence extended southwards, finally reaching Ujjayinī, where Wima Kadphises re-established Śaka power and in order to commemorate "the Śaka reconquest of Mālava" found an era which was practically identical with the Vikrama era".

thought of "deliverance of the poor, the miserable, the helpless and the sick". The celebrated Buddhist author Vasubandhu, to whom his father (Chandragupta I) commended Samudragupta in his early age, was highly honoured by this great king. To use the language of the eminent historian, the late Dr. V. Smith, Samudragupta "was in fact a man of genius, who may fairly claim the title of the Indian Napoleon".

Chapter III

North-Eastern India under the Imperial Gupta Emperors Chandragupta II, Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta

Chandragupta II-Vikramāditya

(c. 61-94 G. E. = c. 380-413 A. D.)

Having enjoyed a long reign over a vast empire established by the strength of his own arms, Samudragupta passed away from the earth some time in the fourth quarter of the fourth century. He was succeeded by his son Chāndragupta II, known in early history and traditions by his title Vikramāditya, a title which is found on coins of various type issued by the monarch. There is reason to believe that Samudragupta had chosen Chāndragupta II to succeed to the imperial throne from amongst many sons, just as he himself was so selected by his own father Chandragupta I. In the genealogical passage of some of the Gupta inscriptions, Chandragupta II is described as *tat-parigṛhīta* [1] i.e. "accepted (as successor) by him" (Samudragupta). The duration of his reign may roughly be ascertained from three of the five epigraphic records belonging to his reign which are dated. His accession may be taken to have occurred about 380 A. D., and his death in 413-14 A. D. This seems to be corroborated by

[1] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 4 and No. 31.

the recent discovery of an inscription[2], written in early Gupta characters on a pillar now kept at Mathurā Museum, which belongs to the reign of Chandragupta II and is dated 61 G. E. (i.e. 380-81 A. D.). This date takes us at least twenty-one years back from the hitherto known first date of this king (i.e. 82 G. E.). Two of the five inscriptions mentioned above are from the Udayagiri hill-cave, situated about two miles to the North West of Bhilsa in the dominions of Scindia in Central India. One[3] of them is dated 82 G.E. (=401-2 A.D.). It records the dedication of two groups of sculptures, a four-armed Vishṇu and a twelve-armed goddess (probably a form of Lakshmī), made by a chief of the Sanakānika tribe, a feudatory of *mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta II (*Chandragupta-pādānudhyāta*)—but, unfortunately, his full name is not preserved, only the last component (*ḍhala*) of his name appearing legible. He describes himself as the son of *mahārāja* Vishṇudāsa, and grandson of *mahārāja* Chhagalaga. Probably, the latter two had some sort of political relation with Samudragupta, whose imperial sovereignty was acknowledged by this and other tribes (*vide* the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta Ll.21-23). The second Udayagiri inscription[4] is undated. Judged from the standard of palaeography and from the fact of the monarch having come in person, during his campaign of conquest of the whole

[2] Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar—*Epi Ind.*, Vol. XXI. Pt. I, No. 1. pp. 1-9.

[3] *Ibid*—No. 3.

[4] *Ibid*—No. 6.

earth, (*kṛtsna-pṛthvī-jayārtha*), to this particular hill, where the other dated inscription of Chandragupta II exists, there can be no doubt that the Chandragupta of this inscription must be Chandragupta II, and not his grandfather of the same name. There is a latent allusion to his using the title of *vikrama*[5], in a verse of this inscription (verse 2), where we read that this monarch humbled down to slavery the rulers of the earth which was "won by him by the price of prowess" (*vikrama*). It records the excavation of a cave in honour of Bhagavān Śambhu, by a hereditary minister (*anvaya-prāpta-sāchivya*) of this *rājādhirāja* (Chandragupta II), who held the office of the Minister of Peace and War (*vyāpṛta-sandhi-vigrahaḥ*). This minister, an inhabitant of Pāṭaliputra, whose name is Vīrasena, was a highly learned man, knowing fully the ways of society, and belonged to the Kautsa *gotra* ; but he was known to people by the name of *Śāba*. It appears that he was a Brahman by caste. However, it is stated that Vīrasena caused this cave to be excavated when he visited this place in the company of his sovereign, during his campaign of conquest of the earth. There seems to be no doubt that the campaign referred to here alludes to the one, during which Chandragupta II conquered Mālwā and Surāshṭra along with Gujarat, which had previously been ruled by foreign Śaka chiefs. The first Udayagiri inscription is a proof that Mālwā, specially Eastern Mālwā, was under

5. The other titles used by Chandragupta II in his coins were *Śrī-vikrama*, *Siṃha-vikrama*, *Ajita-vikrama*, *Vikramāṅka* and *Vikramāditya*.

Gupta rule in 401-2 A. D. Had the second inscription of the same place been dated, we would have got further evidence as to the time, when he probably proceeded against the Western Kshatrapas of Surāshṭra and Gujarat. Some light on the time of Chandragupta II's conquest of these provinces is thrown by the evidence of coins. The latest date found in coins of the Western Kshatrapas is 310 or 31X (Śaka) = 388 A. D. or 388-97 A. D.[6] and the earliest date on the silver coins which Chandragupta II struck after his conquest of Surāshṭra, in imitation of the Kshatrapa coins of that province, is 90 or 90X G. E. = 409 or 409-13 A. D. So, strictly speaking, it may be presumed that the conquest of Surāshṭra and Gujarat by Chandragupta II must have taken place sometime between 388 and 409 A. D. But it has been seen above that the king passed through Mālwā in 401-2 A. D. Hence it appears quite reasonable to assume with the late Dr. Vincent Smith[7] that Chandragupta II's conquest of the territories of the Mālavas and the province of Surāshṭra and their addition to the inherited empire were probably effected in or about 395 A. D. Both these provinces which were formerly under the foreign Śaka rulers (the Western Kshatrapas) were very wealthy and fertile and their annexation to the Gupta empire "opened up to the paramount power free access to the ports of the Western coast" through which sea-borne commerce was carried on between India

[6] Allan—*Catalogue of coins—Gupta Dynasties*, Introduction p. xxxviii and Rapson—*C. A. & W. K.* pp. cxlix-cli, 192-4.

[7] V. Smith—*E. H. I.*, 3rd Edition, p. 291.

and Europe via Egypt. The influence of Samudragupta's conquests of other provinces was felt even by the Śakas, to one of whose dynasties the western Kshatrapas belonged; but it remained for his son Chandragupta II to add Mālava and Surāshṭra to his paternal dominions. The name of the then Kshatrapa ruler slain by the Gupta emperor was Rudrasiṁha. A traditional scandal is alluded to in the *Harshacharita*[8] of Bāṇabhaṭṭa of the 7th century A. D., that a Śaka king was slaughtered "in his enemy's city" by Chandragupta hiding himself in the dress of his mistress, while the former was enjoying the company of another man's wife. The third inscription[9] discovered in Mathurā on a red-sandstone is fragmentary and undated; and although the name of the monarch does not survive in it, it is apparent, from the reference to him as the son of Samudragupta and his royal consort Dattadevī, that it belonged to the reign of Chandragupta II. It may be noted here in passing that the newly-discovered Mathurā pillar inscription, mentioned above, refers itself to the reign of Chandragupta II, son of Samudragupta, with the titles *Bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārāja* and *rājādhirāja*, for both the Gupta monarchs. The last two titles are, in the opinion of Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar, almost "an exact replica of *mahārāja* and *rājādhirāja* which the Kushāṇa kings bore." As Mathurā was "one of the most important

[8] Edition, 1892, p. 479, Chap. VI. Cf. the passage :—" *Aripure cha para-kalatra-kāmukaṁ kāminī-veśa-guptaś-Chandraguptaḥ Śaka-patim-aśātayat*".

[9] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 4.

districts of the Kushāṇa kingdom". Dr. Bhandarkar thinks that this inscription indicates the fact that Mathurā and the surrounding region were wrested from the Kushāṇas for the first time by Chandragupta II. The object of the inscription, however, was the installation of two images (Śaiva *liṅgas*) called Kapileśvara and Upamiteśvara in a hall of statues by one Uditācharyya in the names of two former Māheśvara teachers. The fourth inscription[10] is from Gadhwa in the Allahabad district, and is dated 88 G. E. = (407-8 A. D.). It therefore belongs to the reign of Chandragupta II, whose name has however disappeared from the stone. It is a record of two gifts, each of the value of 10 *dīnāras*, made by some persons (probably both male and female) for the maintenance of *sattras*, etc. In this inscription Pāṭaliputra is mentioned, but the fragmentary nature of the record does not permit us to form any notion as to whether this city was the capital of Chandragupta II. We may agree with the view of the late Dr. V. Smith that "Pāṭaliputra probably continued to be the principal royal residence in the reign of Samudragupta, but there are indications that in the time of his successor, Ayodhyā was found to be more convenient as the headquarters of the government". The issue of the famous inscription of Samudragupta recording his conquests and its incision on the old Aśoka pillar situated in Kosām (in Allahabad district) make it all the more probable that the capital may have been removed towards Mid-India proper, probably

10 *Ibid*—No. 7.

to Ayodhyā, which was at best a sėcondary capital. Samudragupta might have had his own headquarters sometimes at Ayodhyā, where his son Chandragupta II probably had a mint ; and it was really the premier city in the fifth century A. D. But even during Chandragupta II's reign Pāṭaliputra continued " to remain a beautiful city with a very large population, and it must have been ruined by the second invasion of the Hūṇas in the sixth century A. D. in Northern India. Strangely enough "the city had long been a wilderness", when Yuan Chwang lived near it about 640 A. D. (i.e. one century later). Another Gupta centre of administration was at Ujjain, which attained that position after Chandragupta II's conquests of Mālwā. Both the foregoing epigraphic records mention the monarch as *paramabhāgavata*. The fifth inscription which is dated 93 G. E. (=412-13 A. D.) is on the railing of the great stūpa at Sāñchī, known in ancient times by the name of Kākanādaboṭa. The object of this epigraph is to record the gift of 25 *dīnāras* and of a place called Īśvaravāsaka which appears to have been purchased, for this noble purpose, by a payment of the usual price as fixed in the *Pākula* by a donor, named Āmrakārdava, son of Undana. This doner granted the above gifts to the Buddhist monks of Āryya-saṅgha, who came from all quarters to the great monastery (*mahāvihāra*) of Kākanādaboṭa. It appears to be clear that the donation of the 25 *dīnāras* was to be regarded as a capital contribution never to be wasted, but half of the interest on this money was to be spent on the feeding of five monks (*bhikshus*) and the maintenance of a lamp in

the *ratnagṛha* or the shrine of the Buddhist *triratna*, for the enhancement of all the virtues of *mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta, who, as it appears from this inscription, also bore the popular name of Devarāja. According to some inscriptons of the Vākāṭaka dynasty, Chandragupta II appears to have been known also by the name of Devagupta. This king had a daugher of the name of Prabhāvatī, born of the queen, named Kuveranāgā, and he gave her in marriage with Mahārāja Rudrasena II of the Vākāṭaka dynasty in the Deccan. Such kind of *santānasandhi* (matrimonial alliance by offer of the hand of a princess) is of great political importance. The son-in-law might have been of great assistance to Chandragupta II, during his campaign against Mālwā and Surāshṭra. The late Dr. Fleet wrongly took Devarāja to be the name of the donor. The other half of the interest of the money mentioned in the above epigraph was to be spent for a similar purpose for augmenting his own merit. This Āmrakārdava seems to have been an officer in the service of *mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta II, "whose favours gratified the object of his life" (*mahārājādhirāja-Chandragupta-pādaprasad = āpyāyita-jīvita-sādhanaḥ*) and he has shown to the world how a royal dependant should properly behave. That he was an officer of high military rank is evident from the epithet *anekasamar = āvāpta-vijaya-yaśaḥ-patākaḥ*, applied to him, which means that he "won the flag of fame of victory in many a battle." The name of the place of his residence is also recorded, but it cannot be made out with certainty. We cannot in any case assert dogmatically that Āmrakārdava was in the

service of Chandragupta II in any part of Mālwā. From an inscription[11] discovered in the Fyzabad district in U.P., belonging to his son Kumāragupta I's reign and bearing date 436-37 A.D., we know that the imperial ruler Chandragupta II had a Brāhman minister (*mantrin*) named Śikharasvāmin, who had the title of *Kumārāmātya*, he being the son of Vishṇupālitabhaṭṭa and grandson of Kuramāravyabhaṭṭa of the Chandogas, whose *gotras* were Aśva and Vājin. In the year 461 of the *Kṛta* era (=Vikrama era) traditionally used[12] by the Mālava tribe (*Śrī-Mālava-gaṇ =āmnāta*) i.e. 404 A. D., a Varman king named Naravarman, using the title of *mahārāja*, was a ruler in western Mālwā region, having probably his headquarters at Daśapura, modern Mandasor, where a stone inscription[13] was discovered in 1913. From this inscription we learn that this king (*pārthiva*) *mahārāja* Naravarman, was the son of king (*kshitīśa*) Siṁhavarman, and grandson of king (*narendra*) Jayavarman. From the use of the subordinate title *mahārāja* used by this king, it can be easily inferred that Naravarman was a feudatory ruler under the imperial sway of Chandragupta II, for, epigraphic records establish that in 404 A. D., the date of this epigraph, it was this emperor who was on the imperial throne.

This section of the present chapter should not be closed without some reference to the general condition

11 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. X, p. 71.

12 *Vide* Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar's article "Vikrama Era" in *Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, Com. Volume,* (1917) pp. 189-94.

13 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XII, No. 25.

of our country at this time, about which a vivid picture was given by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, who remained in Chandragupta II's territories for six years (405-11 A. D.), deeply engaged in studying Buddhism in the country of its birth, and collecting Buddhist books and legends. The pilgrim took no proper notice of profane objects and events. It is not curious that, absorbed in his study of Buddhism and Buddhistic life in monasteries, the pilgrim did not mention in his account of India even the name of the great Gupta monarch Chandragupta II, not to speak of the feudatory kings under him, in whose territories he lived and moved. The only inference about the state of the country that can be drawn from a perusal of his account is that India enjoyed a most peaceful and prosperous condition, as a result of the Gupta sovereign's good administration, as the people were left to themselves without molestation of any kind, and allowed to enjoy liberty of conscience. He spent three years at Pāṭaliputra, where he studied Sanskrit. Although nowhere in his account did he describe this city as the capital of the reigning monarch, nor his palace in it, he did not forget to speak of the old Aśokan palace, still in existence there, as one which was, in his opinion, built with the assistance of spirits. He thought that the most elegant stone-carving and other sculpture-work in this palace could not be executed by human hands. He found two Buddhist monasteries there, one peopled by the Mahāyānists and the other by the Hīnayānists. The discourses by the monks of of this city were attended by students from all quarters of India. He discovered several lost works on

monastic discipline at this place. The splendid procession of images[14], which every year paraded through the city on the eighth day of the sacred month, attended by singers and musicians, is referred to in his work. The institution of free hospitals in the country can be inferred from Fa-Hien's account of the excellent arrangement of such a hospital in Pāṭaliputra, which was endowed by benevolent and educated citizens. "Patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities," who came there, "are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their wants." While describing the condition and character of the people of the Gangetic plain, called Mid-India by him, the Chinese pilgrim writes—"They have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates or their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The king governs without decapitation or other corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the circumstances of each case". So we find that the administration of criminal justice was not harsh during Chandragupta II's reign, for we learn that men found guilty of repeated rebellion only suffered the amputation of their right hands. We are also told that the king's body-guards and attendants were all salaried employees. The Buddhist rule of life played such a great part even in the reign of this Gupta monarch, who was himself a Brāhmanical

[14] Legge—*Travels of Fa-Hien*, Chap. XXVII, p. 79.

Hindu, a *parama-bhāgavata* as he calls himself, that "throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor eat onions and garlic,—the only exception is that of the Chaṇḍālas". But it should be remembered that the revival of Brāhmanic Hinduism had already begun even before Fa-Hien's travel in India, and Buddhism was losing its hold gradually in many parts of the country, though the Chinese pilgrim either could not observe the decadence, or became somewhat partial towards his own faith. The emperor, however, bore a tolerant spirit to all sects. The pilgrim stated a very strange fact, when he wrote that "in buying and selling commodities" the people "use cowries". This must be interpreted to refer to the smaller transactions of daily life, which the Buddhist pilgrim probably observed. But scholars know that Chandragupta II struck gold coins of various types, of which the archer-type ones were common in currency. He saw a large number of Buddhist monasteries, where many monks resided, while he advanced in his travel from the Indus side to Mathurā. It is indeed a fact that Buddhism was still at its height in this part of India. He spoke very well of the administration in Mālwā, where people lived in peace and happiness under its benignity.

The pilgrim also visited several other cities in Eastern India, Gayā, Śrāvastī, Kapilavastu and Kuśinagar, but he found most of these holy places in a desolate condition. From Pāṭaliputra he went to Gayā, and from the latter place to Champā, the capital of Aṅga. From Champā the pilgrim proceeded to the

port-town of Suṁha (in the Midnapore district of Bengal), the same as the old town of Tāmralipti, (Tamluk), where he lived for two years, and arranged for the making of copies from manuscripts on Buddhist *(Tripiṭaka)* scriptures.[1] At this place he saw 21 Buddhist monasteries. It is well-known that just as Bhṛgukachchha (Broach) was the western port during the Gupta period for communication with the Egyptians, the Romans and other European nations of the West, so also Tāmralipti was the chief port in Eastern India, through which trade and other communications were carried on between India on the one hand and Indonesia, China and other eastern countries of Asia on the other.

Kumāragupta I-Mahendrāditya

(94-136 G. E.=413-456=43 years.)

After the death ot Chandragupta II his worthy son Kumāragupta I, begotton on his chief Queen Dhruvadevī, acceded to the royal throne. The latest date, hitherto known, as belonging to the reign of Chandragupta II is 93 G. E. (412-13 A.D.) and the earliest[2] belonging to that of his son, Kumāragupta I, is 96 G. E. (415-16 A.D.). It is, therefore, very likely that Kumāragupta ascended the throne some-

1 Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 5.
2 *Ibid*—No. 10.

time during the interval between these two dates. The late Dr. V. Smith[3] thinks that his accession took place in the year 413 A.D. The latest known regnal year of this king as obtained from inscriptions[4] is 129 G. E. (448-49 A.D.), and 136 G. E. (455-56 A.D.) from a silver coin[5]. It appears, therefore, that this emperor enjoyed a very long reign, one of more than forty years. Details of political events of his reign are difficult to obtain, but the large number of inscriptions and coins of his reign, discovered in various parts of Northern India, render it possible to form an idea of the events during his rule. It will be apparent below that during this monarch's reign the Gupta Empire suffered no diminution in the Western, Central or Eastern provinces. Rather some additions to his inherited dominions might have been made by him, since we know that Kumāragupta I, like his grand-father the renowned Samudragupta, performed a 'horse-sacrifice' *(aśvamedha)*, certainly as an indication of his assertion of lord-paramountcy by successful military operations.[6] His 'aśvamedha-type' coins[6] with the legend *Śrī-Aśvamedha-mahendra* are evidence in point. The vast extent of dominions ruled over by this emperor is described[7] thus: he ruled over the earth, bounded on one side by the northern mountains (Sumeru and Kailāśa),

[3] V. Smith—*E. H. I, 3rd Ed.* p. 299 and *Oxford History of India*, 1920, p. 156.

[4] Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 11.

[5] *J. A. S. B.*—1894, p. 175.

[6] Allan—*Gupta coins*, Introduction, p. LXXXIX and pp. 68-69.

[7] Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 18.

and on the other by the borders of wood-lands, referring probably to the Vindhya forests on the south, and again by the seas on the remaining two sides. This definition of the extent of the empire refers itself to the year 436 A.D. i.e. about the middle of his reign. The single political event referred to in the inscription discovered at Mandasor (the chief town of the Mandasor district of Scindia's dominions in the Western Mālwā division of Central India), is that king Bandhuvarman, son of king (*nṛpa*) Viśvavarman also described as a *goptā*, governor), was the person[8] who, as a subordinate to the imperial monarch Kumāragupta I, then probably governed (*pālayati*) the city of Daśapura, the capital of Mālwā, in the Mālava year 493 i.e. 437-38 A.D. In that year a magnificent and lofty temple of the sun-god was built with the wealth acquired by the exercise of their weaving craft, by the guild of silk-weavers, who had previously immigrated into that city from Lāṭa-*vishaya* (Central and Southern Gujarat), attracted by the virtues of the kings of that place. Another stone inscription[8] discovered at a village called Gangdhar— near Mandasor—in the Western Mālwā division of Central India, dated the year 480 of the era known as the *Kṛta* era[9] (=Mālava era), and therefore corresponding to the year 423-24 A. D. (i. e. 104 G. E.), records the fact that one Mayūrākshaka, a very able minister of king Viśvavarman, built a lofty and beautiful temple of Vishṇu, an abode of the divine Mothers, full of

[8] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 17.

[9] D. R. Bhandarkar—"*Vikrama Era*" in *Sir R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume*, 1917, pp. 187-194.

female ghouls (*ḍākinī-samprakīrṇṇaṁ*) and a well. The present writer has expressed his opinion elsewhere[10], that this Varman king of Mālwā, Viśvavarman, was a feudatory of Kumāragupta I, during the first part of the latter's reign and was later on (sometime within the next 13 years) succeeded on the throne of Mālwā by his son and successor Bandhuvarman. We cannot concur with the view of Mm. H. P. Śāstrī[11] that this Viśvavarman (and his father Naravarman) do not seem to have acknowledged any obligation or allegiance to the Guptas. Epigraphic evidence rather leads us to a contrary conclusion.

Another historical information of almost the same period, furnished by an inscription[12] dated 117 G. E. (=436-37 A. D.) and incised on a stone *liṅga*, excavated from an ancient site called Bharādhī Ḍīh in the district of Faizabad in U. P., situated near Ayodhyā, the premier city of the period, and a centre of political activity (probably, the second capital of the empire) is that Pṛthivīsheṇa was a councillor (*mantrī*) decorated with the title of *Kumārāmātya*, and was subsequently raised to the position of *mahābalādhikṛta* (Commander-in-chief) by *mahārājādhirāja* Kumāragupta I. This minister was a Brāhman by caste, and his father Śikharasvāmin was also a councillor (*mantrī*), with the same title of *Kumārāmātya* to *mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta II. In this inscription is recorded a gift made by Kumāragupta I's minister,

10 *I. A.* 1919, pp 98-100.

11 *Ibid*, 1913, p. 218.

12 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. X, pp. 71-72 (**No. 15. Karandanda Inscription of the reign of Kumāragupta**).

Pṛthivīsheṇa, for the worship of the Mahādeva, known as Pṛthivīśvara, dedicated after his own name, the donees appearing to have been certain Brāhmaṇas from Ayodhyā.

Four very important copper-plate inscriptions, not of the nature of ordinary royal grants of land, but forming a pecular kind of land-sale deeds recording, as it were, the State confirmation of sale of land transacted between Government and the purchasers, who had to buy land on payment of prices at the usual rate prevailing in different localities, were discovered some time ago in the districts of Rajshahi and Dinajpur in North Bengal. They throw a considerable flood of new light on the political relation of the province of Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti* (North Bengal) with the imperial Gupta house. All of them refer themselves to the reign of Kumāragupta I, whose paramount titles therein used are *parama-daivata*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja*. The first[13] of them dated 113 G. E. (=432-33 A. D.) records the gift of a purchased piece of land by a royal officer (*āyuktaka*) to a Sāmavedin Brāhman, named Varāhasvāmin. The second[14] records the sale by the Crown of one *kulyavapa* of unsettled and untilled *khila-kshetra* to a Brāhman named Karpaṭika, for the convenient performance of his *agnihotra* rites, and is dated 124 G. E. (=443-44 A. D.). The third,[14] recording a

[13] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XVII—The Dhanaidaha copper-plate grant, No. 23. p. 345 ff.

[14] *Vide* the author's own article on the Damadarpur copper plate grants Nos. 1-2. *Ibid*—Vol. XV—No. 7, p. 113 ff; and also Vol. XVII, p. 193.

sale by the State of some land to a person, evidently a Brāhman, for the maintenance of his five daily sacrifices *(pañcha-mahāyajñas)*, and the fourth,[15] recording a donation of a purchased piece of land to the temple of Govindasvāmin, are both dated 128 G. E. (=447-48 A. D.). The absence of any mention of the old, but neighbouring, country of Puṇḍravardhana, from the list of the countries of Āryyāvarta in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta, led us at one time to believe that this province of North Bengal formed from the beginning a part of the Gupta Empire, and was under its direct jurisdiction. Such an inference has now been strengthened by the discovery of the Damodarpur and the new Baigram plates of Kumāragupta I, which prove beyond doubt that during this monarch's reign the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) was a Gupta province, governed by the emperor's agent Chirātadatta, who enjoyed the use of the title *uparika*, and was appointed to this high office by the emperor himself. This governor in his turn appointed *Kumārāmātya* Vetravarman to administer from the town (*adhishṭhāna*) of Koṭivarsha the *vishaya* of the same name. This *vishaya* may be identified with the tract of country constituting the northern part of the modern district of Rajshahi and the southern part of Dinajpur, including also perhaps a portion of the districts of Malda and Bogra. At least for four years (124-128 G. E.) we find *uparika* Chirātadatta acting as the governor of North Bengal under Kumāragupta I

15 The newly-discovered plate (Baigram copper plate grant) now in course of printing for publication in the *Epi. Ind.* by the present writer.

and *Kumārāmātya* Vetravarman as the *vishayapati* (District Officer) of Koṭivarsha. It appears to be an undoubted fact of history, therefore, that North Bengal formed an integral part of the Gupta empire. Hereby the north-eastern limit of the empire is definitely settled, North Bengal coming within the boundary of the empire, but Kāmarūpa (roughly the province of modern Assam) remaining as an outlying province ruled by *pratyanta nṛpatis* (as already known from the Allahabad stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta) who paid a certain kind of obedience to the Gupta sovereigns. The late Dr. V. Smith's identification[16], once regarded as probably correct, of the province of Ḍavāka with the Bogrā (Bograha), Dinajpur and Rajshahi districts to the North of the Ganges must be incorrect; for these districts of North Bengal form the old *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana, governed by the agents of the Gupta emperors. From the mere use of the subordinate title of *mahārāja* with the name of Kumāragupta I, in the Mankuwar (in Allahabad District) stone-image inscription[17] of the year 129 G. E. (=448-49 A. D.), the late Dr. Fleet started the theory that towards the end of Kumāragupta I's reign the emperor was reduced to feudal rank, owing to the attacks of the Hūṇas and the Pushyamitras. Troubles the emperor must have had, in the western part of his vast dominion ; but there is no clear evidence to show that he was actually reduced to the rank of a feudatory ruler. The two Damodarpur and the new Baigram

[16] V. Smith—*E. H. I.*, 3rd *Ed.*, p. 285.

[17] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, V01. III, No. 11, p. 46.

plates, on the contrary, prove that even in 128 G. E., so near the end of his prolonged rule, Kumāragupta I was ruling in full glory, at least in eastern India, through the agency of governors. In the light of the evidence now available from these North Bengal inscriptions, it may be believed that the third copper-plate grant from North Bengal, dated 113 G. E. (=432 A. D.) and discovered in village Dhanaidaha (in Rajshahi District), referred to the province of Puṇḍravardhana being under a governor appointed by that Gupta monarch, and that the *vishaya* of Khāḍā-(ṭā ?)pāra formed, like the Koṭivarsha *vishaya*, a part of the same province, but the mutilated condition of the plate does not permit us to be very confident on this point. This plate also appears to be a land-sale document, recording the purchase of one *kulyavāpa* of cultivated land by a royal officer or *āyuktaka* (his name being lost), paying the price at the usual rate prevalent in the *vishaya* of Khāḍā(ṭā ?)pāra and the donation of the purchased piece of land by the same person to a Sāmavedin Brāhman, named Varāhasvāmin. The object of the newly discovered Baigram charter dated 128 G. E. is to record the purchase of three *kulyavāpas* of revenue-free *khila* (fallow) fields and two *droṇas* of *sthala-vāstu* (home-stead) land belonging to the State, in two localities connected with Vāyigrāma, viz. Trivṛtā and Śrīgohālī, by two persons named Bhoyila and Bhāskara, for the purpose of making a donation thereof, for meeting the expenses of materials, such as perfumes, incense, lamp, flowers etc. for the daily worship of and occasional repairs to the temple of Govindasvāmin (evidently a Vishṇuite

deity), established by their father Śivanandin. The name of the place from where the charter was issued is Pañchanagarī, and the chief administrative officer in charge of the *vishaya* Court (*vishayādhikaraṇa*), who had been approached by the two intending purchasers of State-land is named Kulavṛddhi and styled *Kumārāmātya*. Their application was granted and land was sold to them in accordance with the determination of the Government record-keepers (*pustapālas*), after proper survey and measurement by the customary reeds (*nalas*). The members of the *vishayādhikaraṇa*, the other Government officers and the chief householders of the villages concerned were addressed by the head of the *vishaya*, regarding this sanctioned transfer of land, on receipt by Government of price at the fixed rate of two *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa*, which prevailed in that particular *vishaya*, and they were directed to maintain the grant as a permanent endowment, according to the principle of *akshaya-nīvī*.

It seems quite probable that, like Koṭivarsha of the Damodarpur grants and Khāḍā (ṭā ?) pāra of the Dhanaidaha plate, this Pañchanagarī was one of the *vishayas*, into which the old *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana was divided. It cannot be definitely ascertained, if the village named here as Vāyigrāma is the village of the same name as mentioned in No. 4 of the Damodarpur grants. If that be so, this must have been situated somewhere on the boundary line between the two *vishayas* of Koṭivarsha and Pañchanagarī. At the same time it seems quite certain that the village Baigram, where the plate was discovered,

is identical with Vāyigrāma (L.2), mentioned in the plate itself. Hence it may be assumed that the localities referred to in the plate belong to places in and near Hili in the district of Bogra.

The most striking point of historical importance that can be mentioned in this connection is that in this new (Baigram) inscription also, as in the other North Bengal grants of the Gupta period, we find the same administrative system in force during the age, viz. that the *vishayapatis*, who had the use of the usual title of *Kumārāmātya*, were appointed to be in charge of the *vishayādhikaraṇas* by the Gupta emperor, undoubtedly on the advice and approval of the higher officer of the larger unit, the *bhukti*, who enjoyed the title of *uparika-mahārāja*. The prevalence of such an administrative relation between the different Government authorities, central and provincial, is supported more by the other North Bengal inscriptions of the period than by the new one. Thus Kulavṛddhi the *vishayapati* is described as (directly) meditating the feet of His Majesty (referred to by the word *Bhaṭṭāraka-pāda*). But this probably alludes to the fact, that the appointment of such an administrative head of a *vishaya* by the *bhukti* governor required the sanction of His Majesty, the imperial Gupta monarch. Thep osition of *Kumārāmātya* Kulavṛddhi here must be exactly the same as that of *Kumārāmātya* Vetravarman of Koṭivarsha, appointed to his responsible post by *uparika* Chirātadatta, who himself enjoyed the favour of the imperial ruler, *parama-daivata*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja* Kumāragupta I, as mentioned in Damodarpur plates Nos. 1 and 2 of 124

and 128 G. E. respectively. Kulavṛddhi and Vetravarman must, therefore, have been contemporary officers, under the same sovereign, in the two separate *vishayas* in North Bengal. Attention may be drawn to the curious fact that in this new grant we do not find any reference to the Board of Advisers mentioned in Damodarpur grants Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5, as having aided the *vishayapatis* of Koṭivarsha in the administrative work of the *vishayādhikaraṇa*, the four members forming that Board being (1) the *nagara-śreshṭhin* (the Presedent of the town guild of bankers), (2) the *prathama-sārthavāha* (the representative of the merchant class), (3) the *prathama-kulika* (the representative of the artisan class) and (4) the *prathama-kāyastha* (probably, the chief scribe, the head of the Government officials). The absence of such reference in this new document of the year 128 G. E. (Damodarpur grant No. 2 of Kumāragupta I's reign being also of the same date) belonging to a different part of Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti* is difficult to explain, excepting on the tentative theory that Koṭivarsha (of Damodarpur grant No. 2) was perhaps a more important *vishaya* where Government had to keep better administrative arrangement for the *vishayādhikaraṇa* than in Pañchanagarī of this grant, which may have been a newly formed district at the time. It may also be noted that in this inscription we do not come across the name of the *bhukti* Governor, known from two of the Damodarpur grants (i. e. Nos. 1 and 2). Reference may here be made to some other epigraphic records belonging to the reign of Kumāragupta I. The earliest[18] of these,

[18] Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 10.

discovered at village Bilsad (in Eta District in U. P.), is dated the year 96 "of the augmenting victorious reign" of Kumāragupta I *(abhivarddhamāna-vijaya-rājya-saṁvatsare)* and records the fact of accomplishment, in the temple of the god Svāmi-Mahāsena (Kārttikeya), of the erection of a 'gateway with flight of steps' *(pratolī)*, and the establishment of 'a charitable hall or alms-house' *(dharmasattra)*, by a certain person named Dhruvaśarman. Three partly broken stone inscriptions[19] discovered in the same place, viz Gadhwa (in Allahabad District), appear to refer themselves to the reign of Kumāragupta I—all recording certain gifts, fixed in *dīnāras* and *suvarṇas*, apparently as a contribution to the perpetual maintenance of *sattras* or charitable halls or alms-houses, or for the purpose of providing food and garments for people seeking shelter therein. One of these inscriptions (Fleet's No. 9) is dated 98 G. E. (=417-18 A. D.), and another (Fleet's No. 64) contains (in l. 5) the name of Anantaguptā, whom one may feel tempted to identify with Anantadevī, the name of Kumāragupta I's queen, mentioned in the Bhitari seal[20] inscription as the mother of *mahārājādhirāja* Puragupta. The cave-temple inscription[21] discovered in Udayagiri and dated the year 106 (=425-26 A. D.) during the ever-increasing rule of the family of kings *(nṛpa-sattamānāṁ)* of the Gupta-lineage *(Guptānvayānāṁ)*, records the installation by a Northerner, named Śaṁkara, a disciple of the

19 Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 8, 9 and 64.

20 *Jour. Beng. As. Sec.* Vol. LVIII. Part I, p. 89.

21 Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 61.

ascetic *āchārya* Gośarman of the lineage of *āchārya* Bhadra, of the image of the chief Jina Pārśva, one of the 23 Tīrthaṅkaras, the immediate predecessor of Mahāvīra, who is regarded by Professor Jacobi to have been an historical personage and the real founder of Jain religion.[22] The installation of another Jain image at Mathurā, during the reign of Kumāragupta I, is mentioned in an inscription[23] dated 113 G. E. (=432-33 A. D.). Evidence of gifts made by different religious sects during this period can also be corroborated by such records as e. g., the Mankuwar inscription[24] on the pedestal of a seated image of the Buddha installed by a Bhikshu of the name Buddhamitra in the year 129 G. E. (=448-49 A. D.), during the reign of Kumāragupta I. Professor K. P. Pathak[25] has proposed to identify this Buddhamitra with the person of the same name, who was the teacher of Vasubandhu. Another Buddhist inscription[26] recorded in 131 G. E. (=450-51 A. D.), which should be assigned to the reign of Kumāragupta I, refers to a grant of twelve *dīnāras* as *akshayanīvī*, made by a Buddhist *upāsikā*, named Harisvāminī, the wife of *upāsaka* Sanasiddha. The grant was made to the community of the faithful Buddhists (Āryyasaṅgha) coming from all quarters to the great convent of Kākanādavoṭa i. e. the great stūpa at Sāñchī—for the purpose of daily feeding one

22 Vide—*Cambridge History of India*—Vol. I, p. 153.
23 *Epi. Ind.*—Vol. II, 210.
24 Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 11.
25 *I. A.*—1912, p. 244.
26 Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 62.

bhikshu, who would enter the Āryya-saṅgha ; and this was to be done by means of the interest that would accrue from the investment. It also refers to certain other similar grants of three and one *dīnāras* respectively, for maintaining lamps in the *ratnagṛha* and the *Chatur-Buddhāsana* (the seat of the four Buddhas). Another Buddhist inscription[27] from Mathurā, incised on the pedestal of an image, which was the gift of one, named, Devatā, described as *vihārasvāminī* (either a lady-Superintendent of a *vihāra* or the wife of a *vihārasvāmin*), is dated 135 G. E. (=445-55 A. D.). and probably belongs to the end of the reign of Kumāragupta I. The above few grants indicate clearly that the Gupta monarchs who were themselves Vaishṇavas (*Parama-bhāgavatas*) showed a tolerant spirit towards all religious sects then prevalent in their dominions.

Skandagupta-Kramāditya.

(136-148 G. E.=455-467 A. D.)

From epigraphic records it appears that Kumāragupta I had more than one son. One of them was named Skandagupta, but his mother's name is nowhere found mentioned. Another was named Puragupta, whose mother's name occurs as Anantadevī the Mahādevī (Chief Queen), in the Bhitari seal

[27] *Ibid.—No. 63.*

inscription.[1] Skandagupta was a prince endowed with kingly qualities (*nṛpatiguṇa-niketaḥ*)—and renowned for his mighty intellect and heroic nature. Hence he was most dear to his father who, there is reason to believe, took him to the battle-field during his wars against the many external enemies, who had been threatening the stability of the Gupta empire in many parts, especially in its western provinces, towards the close of his (Kumāragupta I's) reign. In treatises on Hindu Politics[2] we find it stated in clear terms, that as a general rule the king should appoint as Crown-prince a son, usually the eldest son begotten on the Chief Queen, if he be worthy, accomplished and duly trained. As installation on the royal throne is prohibited in the case of a wicked son, although the latter be the only son,—it will not be wrong to suppose that in case of want of a good son, the king could undoubtedly reserve the throne for any other meritorious prince, born of any of his other wives. Kauṭilya[3] advises a king to appoint a qualified and able son to the rank of an heir-apparent (*yauvarājya*) or to the office of the Commander-in-chief of the royal army (*saināpatya*.) We have said before that Skandagupta as *yuvarāja* accompanied his father to the field of battle against foreign foes, especially the Pushya-

[1] *J. A. S. B.*, 1889, pp. 84-105.

[2] Cf. *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*—"न चैकपुत्रमविनीतं राज्ये स्थापयेत् ।" Bk. I. Chap. 17, and *Kāmandaka-nītisāra*—"विनीतमौरसं पुत्रं यौवराज्येऽभिषेचयेत् । दुष्टं गजमिवोद्वृत्तं कुर्वीत सुखबन्धनम्" V. 6. Chap. 7.

[3] Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*—"आत्मसम्पन्नं सैनापत्ये यौवराज्ये वा स्थापयेत् ।" BK. I, Chap. 17.

mitras. A careful study of the Bhitari Stone-pillar[4] and the Junagadh Rock[5] inscription will convince one that Kumāragupta I was killed in battle, during his strenuous conflict with the Pushyamitras. Skandagupta installed the image of Vishṇu (Śārṅgin), and allotted a village to the god and raised the Bhitari pillar bearing the inscriptional record, to commemorate his late father. Probably it was at Bhitari in the Ghazipur district of U. P. that one of the fights between the royal party and their enemies took place. The Hindu traditional idea[6] is that one killed in battle attains heaven. Here also there is explicit mention in the Junagadh inscription that Kumāragupta I did "attain the friendship of the gods" (*pitari surasakhitvaṁ prāptavaty=ātmaśaktyā*, 1. 4) i. e. obtained heaven. The king himself could not live to witness the destruction of his powerful enemies which was wrought by his heroic son, Skandagupta. It is, therefore, that we find it so very pointedly described in the Bhitari epigraph, that Skanda had to run to his mother, who was full of tears (certainly on account of her husband's death), and announce the news of his victory in the war, and his success in restoring "the shaken fortunes of the royal family" (*viplutāṁ*

4 Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 13.

5 *Ibid.* No. 14.

6 *Cf.* e. g. the *Bhagavadgītā* Chap. II, V. 37—"हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गम्" *etc.*

Also *Cf.* the following verse from *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, BK. X. Chap. III, "यान् यज्ञसङ्घै स्तपसा च विप्राः स्वर्गैषिणः पात्रचयैश्च यान्ति। क्षणेन तानप्यतियान्ति शूराः प्राणान् सुयुद्धेषु परित्यजन्तः॥"

vaṁśa-Lakshmīṁ), just as Kṛshṇa did to Devakī. The father was not then alive (*pitari divam=upete*), to congratulate his heroic son on this occasion.

Puragupta the son of Mahadevī Anantadevī might have thought, on receipt of the news of his father's death, that he would have now a fair chance of succeeding the king on the imperial throne, but that was not to be; for, Skandagupta had already established his claim to it by restoring "the shaken royal fortunes of his family", and he had hence no difficulty in occupying the throne, probably with the approval and consent of the counsellors and ministers, as also of the people. The implication of verse 5 of the Junagadh inscription is that after the death of the king and achievment of victory over the foreign enemies viz. the Pushyamitras, the Hūṇas and the Mlechchhas by Skanda, there arose a struggle for the succession amongst Skandagupta, Puragupta and other sons of Kumāragupta I, if there were any, and that "the goddess of royal fortune," on serious consideration of Skanda's virtues, selected him to be her lord "by discarding the other princes" (*vyapetya sarvān=manujendraputrān*), as unfit for the royal office. It was his success in utterly defeating the enemies of the empire and re-establishing the imperial sway, that ultimately secured the throne for Skandagupta, although Puragupta and probably other princes could more legally stand as claimants for it. But the struggle referred to above does not appear to be a fratricidal one, as understood by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, whose view has been refuted by Dr. H. C. Ray

Chaudhuri[7] in his *Political History of Ancient India*. We agree with Dr. Ray Chaudhuri in his opinion that there was no bloodshed amongst the princes, whether born of the same mother or not. This aspect of political affairs, in the beginning of Skandagupta's reign, may corroborate the present writer's view[8] that Puragupta was the first king of a new line of rulers (a branch of the imperial Gupta dynasty), who were allowed by Skandagupta and his successors to enjoy a small kingdom, somewhere in the eastern portion of the Gupta empire, perhaps in South Bihar. It may be remembered in this connection that Tīrabhukti had been under *mahārāja* Govindagupta (a son of Chandragupta II), and later on it must have passed into the hands of his successors or other imperial agencies, like governors (*uparikas*). It still continued as a Gupta province for a long period. We have seen before that Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) also was ruled during the former reign by a provincial ruler appointed by the imperial house. The evidence of the later Buddhist treatise, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[9] is also clear that immediately after Kumāragupta I (Mahendra), his son Skanda (the king whose name commenced with the letter *Sa*) and not Puraguta, ascended the imperial throne. He is also described

[7] Dr H. C. Ray Chaudhuri—"*Political History of Ancient India*", Calcutta 1923, p. 290 ff.

[8] *Vide* the author's articles on the Damodarpur Copper-plate inscriptions, *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XV, pp. 119-20.

[9] *Cf.* the following verse:—"समुद्राख्यो नृपश्चैव विक्रमश्चैव कीर्त्तितः। महेन्द्र-नृपवरो मुख्यः सकाराद्यमतः परम्॥" Chapter 53, p. 628 (ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī)

as *tadpādānuddhyāta* in relation to Kumāragupta I, in the Bihar Stone Pillar inscription.[10]

The Bhitari pillar pillar inscription is unfortunately not a dated record, but it undoubtedly refers to the events of the early part of Skandagupta's reign. We have already discussed above his victory over his enemies as a Crown-prince. A few other points of historical importance yet remain to be mentioned. There is a clear hint in this epigraph that during the last year of his father's reign many enemies of the Empire "rose up with an agreeable desire for extending their conquests" (*svabhimata-vijigīshā-pradoy-tānām*) against Kumāragupta I. These enemies troubled the emperor and the goddess of royal fortune became unstable, so the Crown-prince (Skanda) had to make preparations for meeting them on the field of battle. Skandagupta had "to restore the shaken fortunes of his family" (*vichālita-kula-Lakshmī-stambhanāya*), by fighting against two distinct sets of enemies, who threatened the Gupta empire by their attacks and incursions, viz the Pushymitras and the Hūṇas. These Pushyamitras are identified by some scholars with the Pushpamitras of the *Vishṇupurāṇa* and they are placed by the late Dr. Fleet in Central India, on the Narbuddā side, and by the late Dr. Smith further towards the North. These people are described in this inscription as very powerful and resourceful (*samudita-bala-koshān*). During Skanda's operations against these foes, he "had to pass a whole night by lying down on the earth as his couch" (*kshiti-tala-*

10 Fleet—*Op. cit.*, No. 12.

śayanīye yena nītā triyāmā). The terrible conflict with the Hūṇas, referred to in this inscription (in lines 15-18), ended presumbly in Skandagupta's victory. It was after conquering the Hūṇas that he was successful in finally establishing his rule in place of his late father, and this fact is evident from the epithet *supratishṭhita-śāsanaḥ* (in line 18), as used by the emperor at the time when he caused the pillar to be erected in memory of his father. Mr. Allan's view is that the invasion of the Hūṇas is possibly to be dated about 455 A. D., and by no means later than 458 A. D., if they are to be identified with the Mlechchhas of the Junagadh inscription of Skandagupta. In any case it appears to us that the victory over the Hūṇas was achieved in the beginning of Skandagupta's reign.

We have strong reasons to believe, on the evidence contained in Damodarpur Plates Nos. 1 and 2 and the new Baigram plate, belonging to Kumāragupta I's time, and in Damodarpur Plates Nos. 3 and 4 and the Paharpur plate, belonging to the reign of Budhagupta, that the province of North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana) must have remained in the sole and direct possession of Skandagupta (136-148 G. E.), Kumāragupta I's son and successor, and of Kumāragupta II of the Sarnath inscription, who was probably Skandagupta's son and successor, and that the same system of provincial Government must have continued in North Bengal, for at least about a century, as will be shown later on. It is quite probable that, towards the close of Kumāragupta I's reign, when, as we have shown before, he was ruling without trouble in the

eastern provinces of his empire, the Gupta monarch's power began to diminish in the western provinces, in which the peace was disturbed by the attacks and incursions of the greedy Hūṇas, the Pushyamitras (or foreign foes, if the reading "युध्यमित्रांश्च" instead of "पुष्यमित्रांश्च" of Mr. H. R. Divekar be accepted as correct) and the Mlechchhas, who were utterly defeated by Skandagupta sometime about 136-138 G. E., the date of the Junagadh rock inscription.[11] This rock inscription of Skandagupta's time also testifies to the fact, that under the Guptas the provincial governors were appointed by the emperors, and that the former again had the power to appoint local rulers. We learn from that inscription, that after having throughly defeated his enemies, and "having conquered the whole earth" (*jitvā pṛthivīṁ samagrāṁ*), i.e. having regained his lost provinces, Skandagupta set himself to appoint many provincial governors (*sarvveshu deśeshu vidhāya goptṛn* (*tṛn*)—1. 6), especially for the western provinces, where the emperor required the services of able and trustworthy persons for the work of administration after the Hūṇa troubles His anxiety to appoint a qualified governor for the proper protection of the land of the Saurāshṭras (Kathiawar), and his sense of relief and comfort when he succeeded in selecting one of his own officers (ministers), Parṇadatta by name, as the governor of that western province (*pūrvvetarasyāṁ diśi Parṇadattaṁ niyujjya rājā dhṛtimāṁs=tath=ābhūt*, 1. 9), are graphically described in that inscription. There is also clear indication that Parṇadatta at first declined to

11 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 14.

accept the offer of the high post to which the emperor was pleased to appoint him. But the emperor's repeated requests (*arthanayā kathaṁchit*) forced him to accept it. This governor Parṇadatta again appointed his own son Chakrapālita as the city governor (*svayaṁ=eva pitrā yaḥ saṁniyukto*, 1. 12), just as we see from the Damodarpur plates that the rulers of the province of Puṇḍravardhana, themselves appointed by the emperors, used to appoint the *vishayapatis* of Koṭivarsha, who had their headquarters in the town of that name. It is clear then that the position of the governors in the eastern provinces (e.g. Puṇḍravardhana) of the imperial Guptas corresponded to that enjoyed by the governor of the western provinces (e. g. Surāshṭra and Mālwa). Skandagupta, while appointing the governors of his western provinces, did not apparently deviate from the principle followed by his father with regard to the eastern provinces (Damodarpur Plates Nos. 1 and 2) and perhaps also by his father's ancestors. It must be remembered that this inscription is an eulogistic description of the work of reparation of the old and famous lake or dam named Sudarśana in the peninsula of Surāshṭra. The embankment of the dam burst, in consequence of excessive rains and rise of high floods in the Palāśinī and other rivers belonging to the neighbouring hills, Raivataka and Ūrjayat (old name of mount Girnar), on the night of the sixth day of Bhādra in the Gupta era (Gupta-prakāla) 136 (=455-56 A. D.). The restoration was effected in the next year 137 G. E. by the orders of the city-governor Chakrapālita, at an

enormous expense of money (*dhanasya krtva vyam =aprameyam*) from the royal coffers, and the work was complete within two months' time. One cannot forget in this connection the historical fact that this same Sudarśana lake was once destroyed a little over three hundred years before i.e. in 150 A. D, by a violent rain-storm in the reign of the Mahākshatrapa Rudradāman[12]. This dam was first ordered to be constructed by the Vaiśya Pushyagupta, provincial governor under Chandragupta Mauryya, and afterwards adorned with conduits by the Yavana ruler, Tushāspha, under Aśoka. The first reparation was undertaken by Rudradāman's able minister Suviśākha by name, a Pahlava by race. However, it may be noted here that there is a latent hint in the opening verse of the Junagadh inscription that Skandagupta retrieved his royal fortunes from the hands of his enemies, just as the god Vishṇu (in his Vāmana incarnation) snatched away the same from the demon king Bali. It is true that the emperor had to establish his own rule with much difficulty, in those parts of his empire which slipped away from the hands of his father Kumāragupta I. There is a reference to the fact, that his fame, due to his grand victory over the barbarian races, was proclaimed even by his enemies residing in the countries of the Mlechchhas (*Mlechchhadeśeshu* 1. 4). It is not very easy to identify these Mlechchhas, but it appears they were the out-landish tribes of foreign origin, living in the western parts of India as mentioned in the Purāṇas. Some scholars take them to be the Maitrakas or the

12 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 37 ff.

Hūṇas. Similar to the position of the *vishayapatis* of Koṭivarsha was that of Sarvvanāga[13], the *vishayapati* of Antarvedi (the country lying between the Ganges and the Yamunā) in 146 G. E. Another feudatory ruler, perhaps of some central province, under Skandagupta, who may be mentioned in this connection, was Bhīmavarman[14] ruling in 139 G. E. The discovery of coins[15] of Skandagupta, in some of the Lower Ganges districts, may be regarded as a proof, though somewhat insufficient, that his sway prevailed in parts of Bengal other than Puṇḍravardhana.

The Bihar inscription[16] of Skandagupta's time indicates clearly the prevalance in Eastern India of the worship by the people of the deity Skanda (Kārttikeya, Mahāsena), and the divine Mothers. The existence of this broken pillar-inscription discovered at Bihar, the chief town of the Bihar Sub-division of the Patna district, proves beyond doubt that Skandagupta's royal jurisdiction remained unabated in Magadha (at least in North Bihar including the modern Patna district). The second part of the epigraph is evidently a record of a village field granted as a perpetual endowment (*akshayanīvī*). Had it been preserved in its complete form, this record would have clearly proved, that the procedure of application for the purchase of crown-land, made to the emperor by any officer or private person, was

13 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 16.

14 *Ibid*, No. 65.

15 *J. A. S. B.*, 1910 (Vol. V).

16 Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 12.

almost the same as we find in the Damodarpur and other North Bengal land-sale documents, discovered and explained by us. The first part of this mutilated epigraph seems to have recorded the name of Kumāragupta I's wife,[17] which is not found mentioned in any of the other inscriptions, and hence we are in the dark about the name of Skandagupta's mother. It is not certain to which part of the country the town of Ajapura (1. 25) mentioned here belonged.

There is no doubt that the later years of the reign of Skandagupta were peaceful. Evidence in support of this fact can easily be supplied from two other records viz. the Kahaum (in Gorakhpur district, U. P.) Stone Pillar inscription[18] dated the year 141 G. E. (=450-51 A. D.) and the Indor (in Bulandshahr district, U. P.) Copper-plate grant[19] dated the year 146 G. E. (=465-66 A. D.). The first of them states clearly in the introductory verse that the year 141 G. E. belonged to the peaceful (*śānte*) reign of the Gupta monarch Skandagupta, described herein as "equalling Śakra" (*Śakropamasya*) and "lord of hundreds of kings" (*kshitipaśata-pateḥ*), "whose hall of audience was shaken by the wind produced by the bowing heads of hundreds of kings", "whose fame spread" in all directions and "whose opulence was of the first order". Such description only befits a monarch when his rule is in a settled condition. The epigraph records the installation of five stone images of the Jaina

17 *Cf.* line (3)—[*Sva*]*s=aiva yasy=ātula-vikrameṇa Kumāra-gup*[*t*]*e*[*na*].

18 Fleet—*Op. cit.* No. 15.

19 *Ibid.* No. 16.

Tīrthaṅkaras (*arhatām = ādikartṛn*) by a person named Madra who was generally devoted to Brāhmans, preceptors (*gurus*) and ascetics (*yatis*), on a lofty stone-pillar in the excellent village of Kakubha (ancient name of Kahaum).

The second inscription refers to the year 146 G. E., which belongs to the ever-increasing victorious reign (*abhivarddhamāna-vijaya-rājya-saṁvvatsara*) of *paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja* Skandagupta. During the administration of the *vishayapati* Sarvvanāga at Antarvedi, one Chhandoga Brāhman named Devavishṇu, who was versed in the four Vedas, made an endowment, out of which the expense of oil for an uninterrupted maintenance of a lamp before the image of the sun-god, established in the east of Indrapura by two Kshatriya merchants of the same town should be met. The money was invested with the guild of oilmen (*tailika-śreṇī*), living in that town, headed by their chief Jīvanta. The oil to be supplied perpetually was to weigh two *palas* (for a day?).

The Gadhwa (in Allahabad district, U.P.) Stone inscription[20] which records the installation of an image of Vishṇu under the name of Anantasvāmin and the endowment of a grant, and which bears the date 148 G. E. but has the ruler's name broken away in it, may be regarded as having reference "to the augmenting victorious reign" (*pravarddhamāna-vijaya-rājya-saṁvvatsara*) of Skandagupta.

[20] *Ibid*, No. 66.

Chapter IV

The Successors of Skandagupta and the Decline and Downfall of the Imperal Gupta Rule

In this chapter we should at the outset discuss the most controversial question of who reigned immediately after the emperor Skandagupta, whose last recorded date (on silver coins and on stone inscription) is known to be 148 G. E. One of the three Sarnath inscriptions, engraved on the pedestals of three Buddha images, discovered by Mr. Hargreaves of the Indian Archaeological Department, and examined personally by the present writer in March, 1916, bears the date 154 G. E., while Kumāragupta was ruling the country (*bhūmiṁ śāsati Kumāragupte*); and one of the other two belonging to the reign of Budhagupta (*pṛthivīṁ Budhagupte praśāsati*) bears the date 157 G. E. This Kumāragupta of the Sarnath inscription, whose reign has hitherto been unnoticed, appears to have succeeded Skandagupta on the imperial throne. He was, in all probability, followed by Budhagupta, and should now be called Kumāragupta II. It may be supposed that like Chandragupta II, grand-son of Chandragupta I, Kumāragupta II (of the Sarnath inscription) was a grandson of Kumāragupta I, and this view receives the support of dates also. It seems to be right to hold that his reign was a short one, *circa* 150-156 G. E. In all probability the relation between Skandagupta and Kumāragupta II was that

of father and son, and Budhagupta, reigning in 157 G. E., i. e. within only three years of the Sarnath inscription of Kumāragupta II, may also be regarded as the son and successor of the latter. So the Kumāragupta of about 530 A.D., son and successor of Narasiṁhagupta, and grandson of Puragupta of the Bhitari seal inscription,[1] now becomes Kumāragupta III. The usual view, hitherto held by scholars, headed by the late Dr. V. Smith must now be abandoned. The numismatic evidence obtained from the Bharsar hoard, which contained coins of Samudragupta, Chandragupta II, Kumāragupta I, Skandagupta and Prakāśāditya led Mr. Allan[2] (rightly, we should suppose), to draw "a natural deduction that Prakāśāditya succeeded Skandagupta, and that the hoard was buried in his reign". After refuting Dr. Hoernle's view that Skandagupta and Puragupta were identical, a view which long held the field of historical research in India, Mr. Allan thus concluded[3]: "It is highly improbable that Puragupta was called both Vikramāditya and Prakāśāditya, so that we must attribute these coins (Prakāśāditya coins) to some king, probably a Gupta, whose name is not yet known, and who must be placed about the end of the fifth century A. D." It may be taken tentatively that it was Kumāragupta II, presumaply son and successor of Skandagupta, who used the title *Prakāśāditya* in his coins. We suspect, as will be shown later on, that Kumāragupta II had a second *āditya* title (*Śakrāditya*).

1 Smith and Hoernle—*J. A. S. B.* 1889 (pp. 84 105).

2 Allan—*Gupta Coins*, Introduction, p. li.

3 *Ibid*—Introduction, p. lii.

If our supposition proves after future discoveries to be true, the last clause of Mr. Allan's conclusion quoted above will have to be modified a little ; for Kumāragupta II could not reign later than 156 G. E., as 157 G. E. refers to the reign of the next sovereign, Budhagupta. Again, if the year 156 G. E. belongs to Kumāragupta II's reign, it may be rightly supposed that the Khoh copper-plate grant[4] of Mahārāja Hastin, wherein there is reference to the endurance of the Gupta dynasty and sway (" *Gupta-nṛpa-rājya-bhuktau*, Ll. 1-2). belonged to Kumāragupta II's time. Any other contingency will assign this particular inscription to the time of the next sovereign, Budhagupta, whose feudatory this Mahārāja Hastin (whose known dates range between 156-191 G. E.) undoubtedly was. One known event can, with some certainty, be attributed to the time of Kumāragupta II. The temple of the Sun-god at Daśapura (in Mālwā), which was built in Mālava era 419, i.e. 117 G. E., by the guild of silk-weavers immigrant from the Lāṭa *vishaya*, while Bandhuvarman was governing that city as Kumāragupta I's feudatory, was restored (*saṁskṛtaṁ*) by the same guild in Mālava era 529, i.e. 153 G. E., as we know from the Mandasor stone inscription[5]. The late Dr. Fleet wrote thus—"This second date (529 Mālava era) is, of course, the year in which the inscription was actually composed and engraved; since we are told at the end that it was all composed by Vatsabhaṭṭi and the engraving throughout is obviously the work of one and the same

4 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III. No. 21.
5 Fleet, *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 18.

hand." Hence it may be taken as true that the restoration of this temple of the Sun-god of Daśapura, which fell into disrepair under other kings (as described in the inscription), took place very probably during the reign of Kumāragupta II, when, we have reasons to believe, the western provinces (e.g. Mālwā) were still under Gupta sway, and that the great poet Vatsabhaṭṭi, whose intellectual attainments are so evident from his excellent composition of this inscription, flourished in the same reign.

We shall now show below that the genealogy of the imperial Guptas still continued through Skandagupta for a period of about three quarters of a century, and the Gupta empire did not perish after the death of Skandagupta, as has so long been held by historians. I think the presumption of a renewed attack on the Gupta dominions by the Hūṇas (c. A. D. 465-70), made by the late Dr. V. Smith[6] and others, should now in the absence of positive evidence be given up. Skandagupta's victory in his first battle with the Hūṇas was a very decisive one, and it secured the general tranquillity of all parts (western as well as eastern) of the Gupta empire till the time of his grandson (?) Budhagupta (whose known dates range from 127 to 175 G. E.). The Sarnath image inscriptions and the Damodarpur plates may serve as evidence to show that the imperial Gupta line after Skandagupta ran through Kumāragupta II, Budhagupta and Bhānugupta till at least 224 G. E., the date of Damodarpur plate No. 5, i. e. till 543-44 A. D., if not

6 *Early History of India*, 3rd Edition, p. 310.

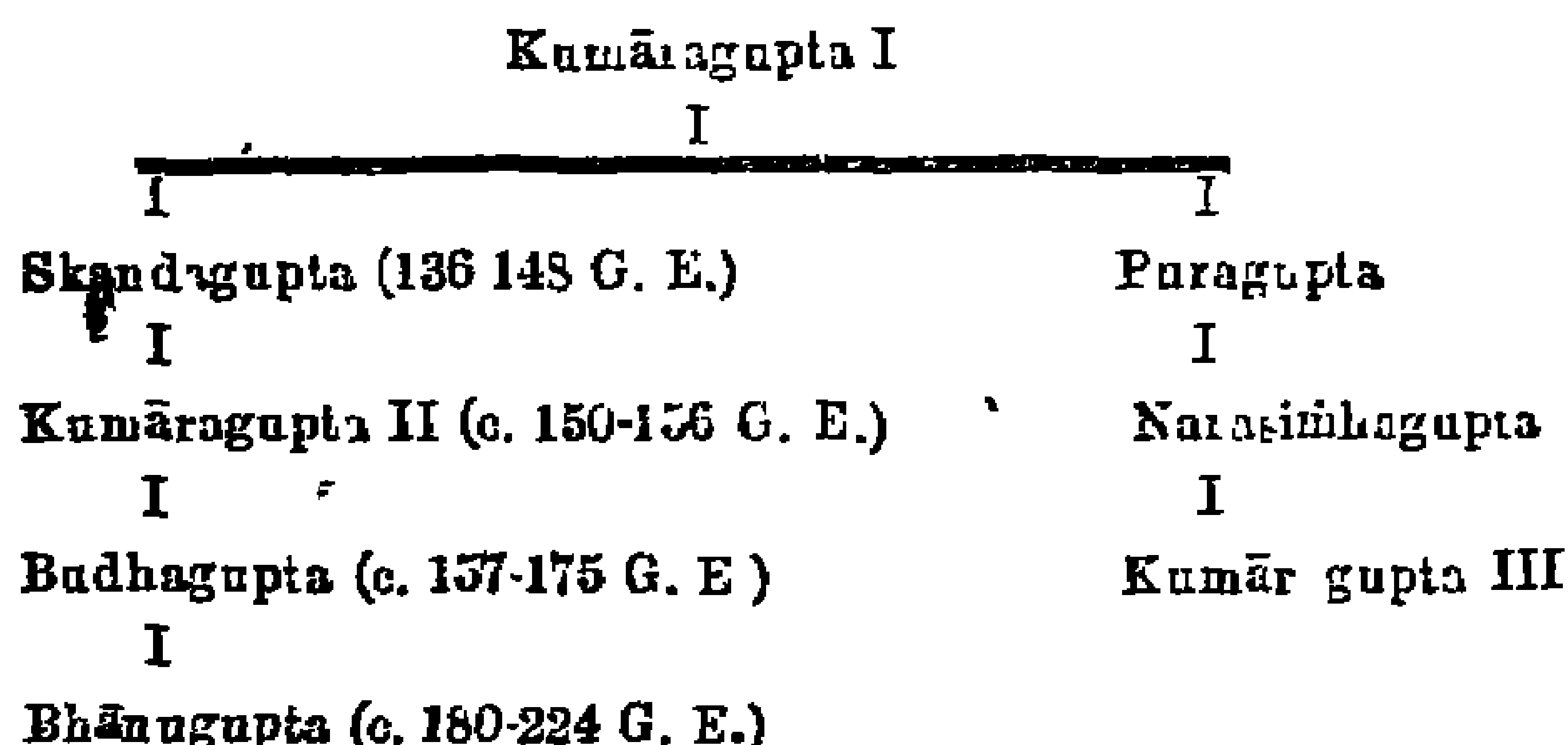
later. But the Bhitari seal inscription above referred to, which gives a genealogy of the early Gupta dynasty for nine generations, does not contain the name of Skandagupta, but carries the genealogy through Puragupta, described as a son of Kumāragupta I by his chief queen Anantadevī, down to Puragupta's grandson named Kumāragupta (now Kumāragupta III), son and successor of his son Narasiṁhagupta. So it is evident that a line of Gupta rulers through Puragupta ran parallel to that, of which the genealogy has been established by the Sarnath inscriptions and the Damodarpur plates. It may not be quite unlikely that during the troublous times after Kumāragupta I's death, when Skandagupta[7] was preparing himself "to restore the fallen fortunes of his family" (*vichalitakula-Lakshmī-stambhanāy=odyatena*, L. 10) and had firmly "to establish again the Gupta lineage, which had been made to totter" (*prachalitaṁ vaṁśaṁ pratishṭhāpya*, L. 14), by fighting the Hūṇas and other foreign tribes in the western portion of his vast empire, Puragupta—no matter whether he was his (Skandagupta's) full or half brother—seized the opportunity to become refractory and to set up a separate and independent rule. Be that as it may, there is now hardly any doubt that the Gupta family broke up about that time into two lines. But with our present stock of knowledge it is not very easy to indicate the place where the branch line headed by Puragupta may have ruled; for, as we shall presently show, the imperial ruler of the main line

[7] Fleet, *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 13.

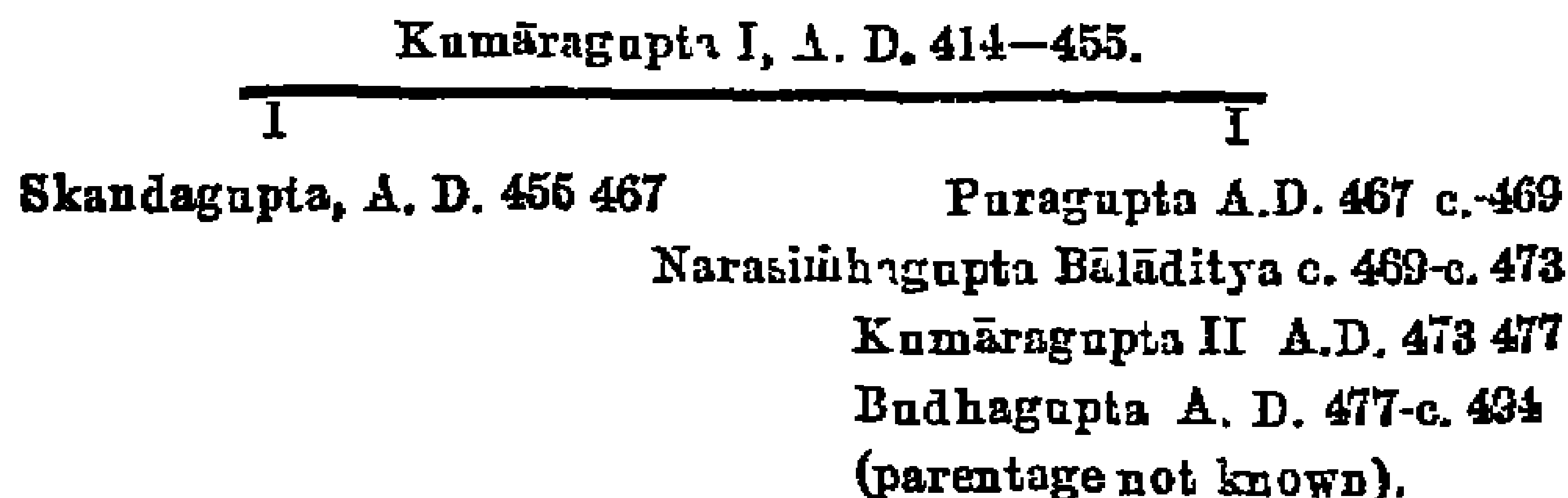
Budhagupta held supremacy, not only over North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana) in the east (Damodarpur Plates Nos. 3 and 4) and Benares (Sarnath image inscription) in the middle, but also over Mālwā in the west. It has been stated before that Budhagupta's predecessor, Kumāragupta II, held imperial sway over the central and western provinces. It is indeed difficult to reconcile the epigraphic documents of the time of Kumāragupta II and Budhagupta, with the Bhitari seal inscription. The rulers of the main line through Skandagupta were undoubtedly more powerful than those belonging to the branch line, for it will be shown below that during Budhagupta's reign the Gupta power was in full height of splendour. It is very probable that the rulers of the stronger and the main line, by alliance of any kind, suffered the other line to rule somewhere in the eastern portion of the Gupta Empire, perhaps in South Bihar. Some scholars like to place their kingdom in the Ayodhyā region. But we have evidence of benefaction by Puragupta's son (Bālāditya), e. g. his building of the famous brick-temple, in Nālandā, the chief seat of Buddhist learning in those days. The other parts of the Gupta empire, including North Bengal and perhaps North Bihar also, continued under the sovereignty of the the stronger branch.[8]

[8] The following genealogical table illustrates the relationship between the Gupta emperors of the two branches according to our view :

The Bālāditya who is mentioned by Yuan Chwang[9] as the father of another king named Vajra appears to have been the same person as Narasiṁhagupta of the Bhitari seal. Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhury[10] is of opinion that these two were different persons, his reason being that Bālāditya is mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim as the immediate successor of one Tathāgatagupta. But the relation between them is not clear in the Chinese versions, and Watters' rendering[11] also does not point out any political or family relation. We think



"The resultant probable genealogy and succession" of the above-mentioned kings as proposed by the late Dr. Vincent Smith (at page 262, *J. R. A. S.* 1919, ought to be inserted here side by side for reference :



9 Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II, pp. 164-165 ; and Beal—*Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, pp. 110-111.

10 *Political History of Ancient India*, pp. 299-300.

11 Watters—*Op. Cit.*, p. 164.

that, of the five kings mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim as having built and added to the structures in the Nālandā Monastery, (1) Śakrāditya, (2) his son and successor Buddha (Budha?)-gupta, and (3) Tathāgata-gupta probably belonged to the main imperial line of the Guptas; and (4) Bālāditya and (5) Vajra to the branch line. Śakrāditya may have been an additional appellation for Kumāragupta II, son and successor of Skandagupta according to our view; and we cannot be quite certain whether Tathāgatagupta and Bhānugupta were 'alternative names of the same king, or the former was totally a different person, whose reign came in between those of Budhagupta and Bhānugupta, or followed that of Bhānugupta. We also think that, like the *birda* Bālāditya for Narasiṁhagupta, the appellation *Vajra* may have been an *āditya* title (*Vajrāditya*) of his son Kumāragupta III. But we must wait for future discoveries to verify such views.

We fully expressed our own view on the question of the genealogy and succession of Gupta kings after Skandagupta, in our article forming an edition[12] of the five Damodarpur Copperplate grants, published in 1919-20 in the *Epigraphia Indica*. Since then it has been criticised by four learned scholars of Bengal viz. Dr. R. C. Majumdar,[13] Dr. H. C. Ray Choudhury,[14] the late Mr. R. D. Banerjee[15] and Mr. N. K. Bhatta-

[12] *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XV, pp. 118-122.

[13] *J. & Proc. A. S. B.*, (New Series), Vol. XVII, 1921, No. 3. pp. 249 55.

[14] *Op. Cit.*, pp. 296-300

[15] *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, Vol. I, pp. 67 80; and *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XVIII, p. 83 ff.

sali.[16] In support of his contention, Dr. Majumdar referred to the opinion of the late Dr. V. Smith,[17] the late Mr. R. D. Banerji and Mr. Panna Lall.[18] Mr. Panna Lall's article was published in January 1918, and the late Dr. V. Smith's acceptance of his conclusions was announced in 1919. But although the present writer, while contributing in 1916 to the pages of the *Epigraphia* his article (published in 1919-20) on the above-mentioned Gupta plates, had no opportunity to go through their papers, he does not even now, feel inclined to abandon his view on the possible reconciliation between the apparently contradictory materials on genealogy, obtained from the Sarnath and the Damodarpur inscriptions on the one hand and the Bhitari seal text on the other. To him it seems that the indication is clear that the imperial Gupta dynasty included three Kumāraguptas, two in the main and one in the branch line. It may be held that the imperial line, headed by Puragupta, and running through his son Narasiṁhagupta and grandson Kumāragupta III, was really a separate branch, cut away from the main imperial line which continued to rule through Skandagupta and his successors, viz. Kumāragupta II, Budhagupta and Bhānu(?)-gupta and others, if any. Dr. Majumdar says that the late Dr. V. Smith and Mr. Panna Lall supported his view that only one imperial Gupta line of kings continued after Skandagupta through Puragupta, Narasiṁhagupta and Kumāragupta II, after whom came in

16 *Dacca Review*, 1920, pp. 50 ff.

17 *J, R. A. S.*, 1919, pp. 260-62.

18 *Hindusthan Review*, January 1918 (*Reprint*).

Budhagupta and others. They all think that the name Kumāragupta in the two sets of documents represents one and the same person, and he must be called Kumāragupta II. To us it seems quite abnormal that, between 148 G. E. (the last known date of Skandagupta) and 157 G. E. (the date of Budhagupta in the Sarnath inscription) i.e. within the brief space of nine years, we should find three reigns crammed in, viz. those of Puragupta, Narasiṁhagupta and Kumāragupta. Dr. Ray Choudhury cites other cases of such short reigns, but they may be treated as entirely exceptional. We do not either consider the view of Mr. Panna Lall wholly supportable. The late Dr. V. Smith's defence of his view, that the alleged defeat of the Hūṇa King, Mihirakula, by Bālāditya is to be discarded as unhistorical, undertaken only to push back the date of Kumāragupta II, is weak, and there is reason to believe that he was afterwards inclined to change his opinion. In his letter dated January 7, 1917, addressed to this author on the latter's communication of the results obtained from the study and decipherment of the Damodarpur plates, he wrote, "It is clear that a hitherto unrecorded reign of Kumāragupta II, *circa* 150-156 G. E., came in after Skanda. This No. II in all probability was a grandson of K.G.I. (Kumāragupta I), and died young and childless. The K-G (Kumāragupta) of about A. D. 530 now becomes No. III. * * * * The Gupta list will require considerable revision". In a second letter dated, Oxford, 12. 5. 18, and written to the present writer on receipt of the advance copy of the proofs of his

paper on the Damodarpur plates, the learned Doctor remarked, "What you say deserves the utmost attention, I hope in time to be able to study your observations carefully". As regards the opinion of Mr. N. K. Bhattasali, although he has partly supported our theory that the kings of the main line, beginning with Skandagupta and ending with Bhānugupta, ruled in an unbroken line of succession, his peculiar view that Puragupta was a child of 4 or 5 years, when Kumāragupta I died and Skandagupta succeeded him, and that he came to the throne only after Bhānugupta's death about 510 A.D., does not appeal to reason. Regarding Dr. Majumdar's other argument that, in locating the rule of Puragupta's line in South Bihar, we ignored the existence of the last few kings of the Later Guptas of Magadha who lived about the middle of the 6th century A. D and held Magadha in their possession, we may only say here that the first two or three members of the Later Gupta family of Magadha, at first only local chiefs probably under the rulers of the branch imperial line, began to grow in royal power during the days of decline of the authority of that line, i.e. after the end of Kumāragupta III's reign. We shall show in a later chapter that it was Jīvitagupta I, the third chief of the Later Gupta line, who first found opportunity to assert his sovereign power in Magadha; and this he could do only after a complete disappearance of the branch imperial line of Puragupta, in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D. At this time the main imperial line was also proceeding towards decline of regal power. We also think that the first three Maukhari

chiefs were probably vassals under the imperial Guptas of the main line, and held sway as local rulers in the Ayodhyā region, in the first half of the sixth century, during the troublous times due to the fresh Hūṇa inroads and gradual rise of Yaśodharman of Malava.

Further elucidation of this most controversial question of Gupta genealogy and succession after Skandagupta is not possible at present, and the whole question must yet be left undetermined. We are glad our friend Dr. Majumdar, in his paper on the refutation of our views on the subject, concluded by saying that his views also "are to be looked upon as tentative hypotheses". The present writer will feel no hesitation in discarding his own views after re-examination of new facts, or in the light of stronger arguments of other scholars, in support of their opinion which is running contrary to his own at present. The last word yet remains to be said on this matter.

The next very important question that may now be discussed is, who is the Budhagupta of Damodarpur Plates Nos. 3 and 4? These two plates, of which the dates are unfortunately cut off and lost, show that, like Kumāragupta I (Damodarpur Plates Nos. 1 and 2), Budhagupta also used the imperial titles of *parama-daivata*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja*, and bestowed favours on his own dependants, the governors of the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana who were appointed by the sovereign himself. We have evidence to show that during this emperor's rule there was at least one change of government in North Bengal. From Plate No. 3 it

is seen that *uparika-mahārāja* Brahmadatta was governor of Puṇḍravardhana whereas from Plate No. 4 we learn that *uparika-mahārāja* Jayadatta was so. We have shown that of the two governors of Puṇḍravardhana under Budhagupta, viz Brahmadatta and Jayadatta, the latter comes later in time than the former. Under the governorship of Jayadatta, the local administrator for the *vishaya* of Koṭivarsha was the *āyuktaka* Śaṇḍaka (or Gaṇḍaka). Here therefore we find the most important historical fact, that North Bengal continued under the royal jurisdiction of the imperial Gupta monarch Budhagupta. It remained a Gupta province even under the next emperor (Damodarpur Plate No. 5).

For the present the earliest limit for Budhagupta's time cannot be put later than 157 G. E. (=476-77 A. D.); for the Sarnath inscription shows clearly that Budhagupta was the reigning sovereign, when the Gupta year 157 had expired,—thus,

"*Guptānāṁ samatikrānte sapta-pañchāśad=uttare śate samānāṁ pṛthivīṁ Budhagupte praśāsati*".

According to Professor K. B. Pathak's calculation,[19] this inscription belongs to the current Gupta year 158. Another copper-plate grant[20] (a land-sale document of the type of Damodarpur grants) of the Gupta period, discovered (in 1927) by Mr. K. N. Dikshit of the Indian Archaeological Depart-

19 *Vide* p. 204 of Professor K. B. Pathak's article, "*New light on the Gupta Era and Mihirakula*"—*Sir R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume*, Poona, 1917.

20 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XX, No. 5. p. 59 ff.

ment, during the recent excavations of the great temple at Paharpur, in the Rajshahi district of North Bengal, is found to have been issued from Puṇḍra-vardhana (its head-quarters, *adhishṭhāna*), and dated the 7th day of Māgha, in the Gupta-Saṁvat 159 (=478-79 A. D.). Although the name of the reigning emperor at the time is not specified in it by name, but only referred to by the word *paramabhaṭṭāraka*, there can be no doubt that the charter belonged to the reign of Budhagupta. Before Mr. Hargreaves' discovery of the Sarnath inscription, and ours of the Damodarpur plates, the only reference to Budha-gupta that had been known was the mention of him as a king, on the Eran stone pillar inscription[21], bearing the date 165 G. E. (=484-85 A. D.), and on some silver coins,[22] one[23] of which bears the date 175 G. E. (=494-95 A. D.). This Eran stone pillar inscription contains two most significant and clear expressions, viz.

(1) "*Bhūpalau Budhagupte*",1. 2 ("while Budha-gupta was the ruler on earth") ;

(2) "*Kālindī-Narmmadayor=mmadhyaṁ pālayati lokapāla-guṇair=jjagati mahārāja-śriyam=anubhavati Suraśmichandre cha*", Ll. 3-4 ("and while Suraśmi-chandra, enjoying in the world the glory of a Mahārāja on account of his qualities as a Lokapāla, a regent of one of the quarters, was governing the country lying between the Kālindī and Narmadā"

[21] Fleet, *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 19.

[22] Allan, *Indian Coins, Gupta Dynasties*, p. 153, and Introduction, p. cv.

[23] *Ibid*, p. 153, Coin No. 617.

The coins referred to above imitate the types of the imperial ruler Skandagupta's silver central coinage, and have on the reverse the portrait of a peacock with wings and tail outspread, as first adopted by the imperial monarch Kumāragupta I, and on the obverse the legend, befitting a paramount sovereign, "*Vijitāvanipatiḥ Śri-Budhagupto divi jayati.*" The existence of these coins and the pillar inscription ought to have been sufficient warrant for historians to hold that Budhagupta was an imperial Gupta monarch, having feudatory chiefs like Suraśmichandra and others, under him, to rule over different provinces of Northern India ; and they ought to have examined Cunningham's view that he was on the imperial throne of the Guptas and "may have reigned from about 480—510 A. D.[24]", and that "there is sufficient evidence to prove that his sway was equally extensive[25]". These remarks of the great archaeologist are now turning out to be approximately true ; for the Sarnath inscriptions and the Dāmodarpur and Paharpur plates of Budhgupta's time also testify to the fact, that this emperor's rule included the eastern as well as the western provinces of the extensive Gupta dominion. We have seen in Damodarpur plates Nos. 3 and 4 that Budhagupta held imperial sway over North Bengal, which was governed by his own dependent officers, and that he had in his imperial possession the kingdom of Mālwā (more particularly the vast tract of land between the Kālindī and Narmadā).

[24] Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 162.

[25] *Ibid*, pp. 162-63.

It is easy to see that the position of *mahārāja* Suraśmichandra, governing the land lying between the Yamunā and the Narmadā, may have been exactly similar to that enjoyed by the *uparika mahārājas* Brahmadatta and Jayadatta, the governors of the province of Puṇḍravardhana. Just as, according to the Damodarpur Plate No. 4, the *āyuktaka* Śaṇḍaka (or Gaṇḍaka), carrying on the administration of the *vishaya* of Koṭivarsha from the *adhishṭhāna* (town) of that name, was under the authority of Jayadatta, the governor of Puṇḍravardhana, so also, as we have reason to think, the *mahārāja* Mātṛvishṇu of the Eran stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta's time, "who has been victorious in battle against many enemies" (*aneka-śattru-samara-jishṇunā*, 1. 7), was a district officer (*vishayapati*) under the authority of Suraśmichandra, the governor of Mālwā. The truth of this remark may be ascertained from the other Eran stone Boar inscription[26] of Toramāṇa's time, which discloses the fact that in the first year of this Hūṇa chief's rule in that portion of Āryyāvarta (Mālwā), Dhanyavishṇu (now deceased, *svarggatasya*, 1. 6) built a temple (in which the Boar-incarnation of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa stands); and that he built it in his own *vishaya* of Airikiṇa (*śilā-prā*[*sādaḥ*] *sva-vishay*[*e*] =*sminn*=*Airikiṇe kāritaḥ*, 1. 7). There seems then to be no doubt that the *mahārāja* Mātṛvishṇu, Dhanyavishṇu's elder brother, was the *vishayapati* of the *vishaya* of Airikiṇa in the year 165 G. E. (i. e. 484-85 A. D.), when Suraśmichandra

[26] Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 36.

was Budhagupta's governor in Mālwā and the adjacent tracts of land. A city, also of this name, Airikiṇa, (the modern village Eran in the Khurai Sub-Division of the Sagar District in the Central Provinces), is mentioned in the Eran stone inscription[27] of Samudragupta. Hence we may say that this old *vishaya* of Airikiṇa had continued to be a Gupta territory from the time of Samudragupta till at least 165 G. E. of Budhagupta's reign ; and it seems very probable that it afterwards passed into temporary possession of the Hūṇa *mahārājādhirāja* Toramāṇa, whose supremacy was apparently acknowledged by Dhanyavishṇu, the younger brother of Mātṛvishṇu. So the imperial ruler Budhagupta's supremacy in the western portion of the Gupta empire is proved. The historical insight of the late Dr. Fleet led him to presume[28] that "these two kings (Budhagupta and Bhānugupta) were of the early Gupta lineage, though possibily not connected by direct descent with Skandagupta", and that[29] "Budhagupta comes chronologically immediately after Skandagupta, Bhānugupta somewhat later". These remarks of the late Doctor nearly approached the historical truth, as we have shown above. Budhagupta comes chronologically, though not immediately, after Skandagupta, but immediately after Kumāragupta II, presumably a son and successor of Skandagupta, and there is no reason why we should not now consider him to have belonged to

27 *Ibid*, No. 2, p. 20.

28 *Ibid*, Introduction, pp. 1-2.

29 *Ibid*, Introduction, p. 1.

the early Gupta lineage. But in no way was there any ground for the supposition that Budhagupta's[30] "territory lay between the Jumnā and Narbadā" only, or that there was ever a separate dynasty[31] known as "the Guptas of Eastern Mālwā", as wrongly believed by Dr. Hoernle, V. Smith, Allan and others. We should no longer be justified in holding the view[32] that Budhagupta and Bhānugupta "were the heirs of Skandagupta in that (i. e. Mālwā) region" only, and that "Budhagupta was a ruler of some importance", having "held part at least of the territory in which they (i. e. his coins) had been current". Those views must now be rectified in the light of the new discoveries. All that we obtain as historical truth from the Eran stone pillar inscription mentioned above is that Budhagupta was the imperial "ruler of the earth", and that it was his feudatory governor Suraśmichandra's (and not his own) territory that lay between the Yamunā and the Narmadā. From the Sarnath inscription of this monarch's time and from his coins obtained there, it may plausibly be concluded that Benares also was subject to his sovereign authority. The fact, discovered from the Damodarpur and Paharpur plates, of Budhagupta's holding imperial sway over North Bengal supplemented by the fact, already known, that he held similar sway at least till 165 G. E., over Mālwā and over Benares, will enable us to revise the

[30] *J. R. A. S.*, 1889, p. 135 (*vide* Vincent Smith's paper on the *Coinage of the Early Imperial Gupta Dynasty of Northern India*).

[31] Allan, *Indian Coins, Gupta Dynasties*, Introduction, p. lxii.

[32] Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd Edition, p. 314.

theory[33] hitherto generally held by scholars, that the Guptas lost their sway over the western dominions from the time of Skandagupta.

From the various records in hand we find that Budhagupta was on the imperial Gupta throne at least during the years from 157 G. E. to 175 G. E. (i. e. from 476-77 A. D. to 494-95 A. D.). In the light of the new documents the most significant expression, "*gupta-nṛpa-rājya-bhuktau*" ("during the enjoyment of sovereignty by the Gupta kings"), which occurs in some of the grants of the Parivrājaka *mahārājas* Hastin and his son Saṁkshobha, may now be rightly explained. These two subordinate kings were undoubtedly under Gupta allegiance, and the kingdom of Ḍabhāla or possibly Ḍabhala, the older form of Ḍāhala (modern Bundelkhand), which had come down to them by inheritance, together with all the country included in the eighteen forest kingdoms, was governed by them as contemporaries of Budhagupta, and probably of Bhānugupta also, as will be shown below. The Khoh plate[34] of Hastin, dated 163 G. E., must belong to the time of the paramount ruler Budhagupta. It is not unlikely that the *mahārāja* Jayanātha of Uchchakalpa, near Hastin's kingdom, was also a feudatory chief owing allegiance to Budhagupta, although no mention is made in his inscriptions of the ruling imperial Gupta sovereign.

33 *Vide* Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, 3rd Edition, p. 311, and Allan's *Indian Coins*, *Gupta Dynasties*, Introduction, p. xlix.

34 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 22.

The copper-plate inscription[35] of this chief, dated the year 174, which was taken by the late Dr. Fleet[36] to belong to the Gupta era, must have belonged to the reign of Budhagupta. However, it may now be said with certainty that at least till the year 175 G. E. the western provinces of the early Guptas were intact, and that they had not yet begun to lose their sway and influence over them. It is evident that Budhagupta's reign was long and flourishing. Commenting on the expression *Gupta-nṛpa-rājya-bhuktau*, referred to above, the late Dr. Fleet held the view, that the Guptas were still in full power, during the fourth quarter of the fifth century A. D., and wrote,[37] "this expression is of importance, in showing clearly that the Gupta dynasty and sway were still continuing". It may now be supposed without doubt that, except during the first few years, the reign of Skandagupta was as glorious as that of his predecessors, and the assumptions made by the late Dr. V. Smith,[38] that Skandagupta was "forced at last to succumb to the repeated attacks of the foreigner" about 470 A. D., and that his death may have "occurred in or about the year 480 A. D.", are contradicted by the new discoveries at Sarnath, Damodarpur and Paharpur. The Gupta empire rather continued to flourish for many years in its accustomed glory under Skandagupta's successors, Kumāragupta II and Budhagupta, if not also under Bhānugupta.

35 *Ibid*, No. 26.

36 *Ibid*, p. 118.

37 *Ibid*, Introduction, pp. 20-21.

38 Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd Edition, pp. 310-11.

In Damodarpur Plate No. 5 only a part of the ruling emperor's name is given, the most important portion before the family surname *Gupta* being cut off from the plate and lost. From the size of the characters used, it appears that the portion of the copper lost at the end of line 1 could not contain more than two letters. This Gupta emperor is found to have been ruling in 224 G. E. (=543-544 A. D.) and, like Kumāragupta I and Budhagupta in the different plates, to have used the imperial titles *parama-daivata*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, and *mahārājādhirāja*. It may be hoped that future discoveries will acquaint us with his name. For the present we have presumed to take it to be Bhānugupta, whose sovereignty may have continued at least till 543-44 A. D., if not still later. Whatever the name may have been of this Gupta monarch, whose rule continued in the North-Eastern provinces of the early Gupta empire, till some time after the first quarter of the sixth century A. D., it is now known that he also, like his predecessors, bestowed his royal favours upon the governor of the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana, who used the usual title of *uparika-mahārāja*, but who in this case appears to be the emperor's own son (*Rājaputra-deva-bhaṭṭāraka*). This royal governor, in keeping with the administrative system prevalent under the early Guptas, appointed Svayambhūdeva as the *vishayapati* of Koṭivarsha. It is evident then that so late as 543-44 A. D., the early Gupta rule continued intact in the eastern province of the empire. But the emperor's appointment of his own son as governor of Puṇḍravardhana may be supposed to point to the fact, that the time was a

troublous one for the empire,—many parts of which, especially in the west, had by this time already been lost. It cannot be said with any degree of certainty what was the attitude of the contemporary Gupta ruler (perhaps Narasiṁhagupta) of the branch line towards the main, represented by Bhānugupta. Nor can we, in the absence of definite facts, exactly ascertain when and how Bhānugupta, or his predecessor, lost sway over the western Gupta provinces. We have seen before that in the Gupta year 165 Budhagupta wielded supremacy over the vast tract of land between the Yamunā and Narmadā, and that under his own governor Suraśmichandra, Mātṛvishṇu was the *vishayapati* of Airikiṇa. But we have also seen that this Mātṛvishṇu's younger brother, Dhanyavishṇu, owed allegiance to the Huṇa *mahārājādhirāja*, Toramāṇa (whose first regnal year is mentioned in the Eran Boar-inscription[39]), and not to any Gupta ruler, who may have been on the imperial Gupta throne at that time. So it is quite reasonable to think that towards the close of Budhagupta's reign (*circa* 180 G. E. according to Professor Pathak), the decline of the glory of the imperial Gupta line could be marked to some extent. The Hūṇas, though once utterly defeated about half-a-century before by Skandagupta, may have continued from time to time to disturb the Gupta rulers and in all probability, made a fresh attack in the west under their chief Tormāṇa, who succeeded in establishing himself in Mālwā and Surāshṭra. It was perhaps during this

39 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 36.

time that the old Gupta province of Surāshṭra threw off the Gupta yoke, under Bhaṭārka of the Maitraka clan, who may have paid tribute to the Hūṇa chief. But the Gupta sovereign had still some supremacy over the central provinces of the empire ; for in the Majhgawan copper-plate inscription[40] of *mahārāja* Hastin, dated 191 G. E. (510-11 A. D.), and in the Khoh copper-plate inscription[41] of Hastin's son, Saṁkshobha, dated 209 G. E. (528-29 A. D.), reference is made to the fact that the early Guptas were still enjoying sovereignty. In the Eran posthumous stone pillar inscription[42], Bhānugupta is mentioned as "the bravest man on the earth, a mighty king, equal to Pārtha, exceedingly heroic" (*jagati pravīro rājā mahān Pārtha-samo=ti-śūraḥ*, 1. 5) ; and it is recorded there that Goparāja (undoubtedly a feudatory of Bhānugupta) fought a "very famous battle" (*y[u]ddhaṁ sumahat-prak[a]śaṁ*, 1. 6) by the side of Bhānugupta, but was killed in the action, and that Goparāja's wife accompanied her husband, cremating herself on his funeral pyre. The pillar which bears this inscription was set up as a memorial at the very place where the battle was fought. Nothing, however, can be known from this record, as to who the enemy was, against whom Bhānugupta and his feudatory Goparāja, in the company of their other allies (*mittrāṇi*, 1. 6), fought, nor is it mentioned whether the emperor and his party were at all defeated. It is only stated that Goparāja was killed

40 *Ibid*, No. 23.
41 *Ibid*, No. 25.
42 *Ibid*, No. 20.

in the action. It may reasonably be supposed that this enemy must have been the Hūṇas, who were now probably led by Mihirakula, but who had already under that chief's father, Toramāṇa, succeeded in bringing under their occupation Mālwā and other tracts of land in the west. Considering the fact that 18 years after this "very famous battle", which was fought in 191 G. E., the early Gupta supremacy was still prevalent in the neighbouring kingdom of Bhānugupta's feudatory, Saṁkshobha[43] (Hastin's son), whose inscription bears date 209 G. E., one feels inclined to believe that Bhānugupta was victorious in 191 G. E. over the Hūṇas. Hence it is clear that the authority of the Hūṇa chief Toramāṇa or his son, the tyrant Mihirakula, could not have penetrated into any kingdom east of Mālwā. If our Damodarpur Plate No. 5, dated 224 G. E., belongs to Bhānugupta's reign, as we have supposed it does, this Gupta ruler also, like his predecessor, had a very long reign, at least extending over the years from 191 G. E. to 224 G. E. (i. e. 510-11 A. D.—543-44 A. D.), so that both the Parivrājaka *mahārājas* Hastin and his son Saṁkshobha, and the Uchchakalpa *mahārāja* Sarvanātha, whose recorded dates[44] are respectively 193, 197 and 214 G. E., and probably Sarvanātha's father Jayanātha also, were contemporaries and feudatories of Bhānugupta. At any rate Professor Pathak's conclusion[45] that the downfall of the Gupta

[43] Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 25.

[44] *Vide ibid*, Nos. 28, 30 and 31 respectively.

[45] *Vide* the Introduction to his Second Edition of the *Meghadūta* (Poona, 1916), pp. xi-xii. and, pp. 214-15 of his articles

empire, effected by the Hūṇa invasion, took place towards the close of the fifth century A. D., does not seem to be warranted by facts ; for we have shown above that the Hūṇas occupied only a part of the Gupta empire in the west, the central and eastern provinces (e.g. Puṇḍravardhana) still remaining under Gupta domination. Professor Rapson's view[46] that during the last quarter of the 5th century A. D. "the northern and central provinces (E. Mālwā) were held by different branches of the imperial family ; and in other parts of the empire powers previously subject or feudatory became independent" does not seem to be wholly correct ; for as far as we can see only one branch of the main line wielded some royal authority somewhere (in South Bihar, as we think) in the east, and it does not appear that all the former feudatories became independent of Gupta supremacy. Even if we accept Professor Pathak's view[47] that the initial year of Mihirakula was 502 A. D., we cannot say that this year "marks the end of the Gupta empire" ; for we have a Gupta emperor still ruling as the "lord of the earth" in 224 G. E. (543-44 A. D.), having Puṇḍravardhana under a governor of his own appointing, and it is perhaps his rule that is referred to in the inscription[48] dated 209 G. E. The only natural conclusion to be drawn in this connection is

on "*New Light on the Gupta Era and Mihirakula*" in the *Sir R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume.*

46 Rapson, *Indian Coins* (*Encyclopedia of Indo-Aryan Research*), p. 26, § 92.

47 *Vide*, p. 217, *Sir R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume.*

48 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III. p 25.

that the vast Gupta empire began to be circumscribed in extent, owing to the inroads of the Hūṇas, towards the close of the reign of the imperial monarch Budhagupta, and that it was from Bhānugupta's time that the diminution of Gupta power and glory actually commenced. It may be rightly said that Mihirakula, who reigned at least for 15 years[49] was a contemporary of Bhānugupta, the imperial Gupta sovereign, and was not a paramount sovereign of the rank of the early Guptas, as supposed by some scholars, dominating the whole of their former empire, but a king who had under his jurisdiction only some of its western provinces.

Both Budhagupta and Bhānugupta were contemporary overlords of many of the feudatory princes, who were not dependent on the Hūṇa chiefs, Toramāṇa or Mihirakula. The decadence of Gupta glory began, as remarked above, during the closing years of Budhagupta's reign; but the complete overthrow of the imperial Gupta power, of both the main and the branch lines, was in all probability brought about not by foreigners, the Hūṇas, but by the ambitious chief Yaśodharman of Mālwā. From the three Mandasor stone inscriptions[50] we learn of two kings, named Yaśodharman and Vishṇuvardhana, in the Mālwā region, when Bhānugupta was in all probability enjoying imperial sovereignty in the central and eastern provinces of the Gupta empire during the first quarter of the sixth century. The contents of

49 *Vide* the Gwalior stone inscription, Fleet, *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 37, wherein the 15th regnal year of Mihirakula is mentioned.

50 Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 33-35.

these three inscriptions have been thoroughly discussed by Mr. Allan,[51] accordidg to whom Yaśodharman was the suzerain of Vishṇuvardhana, and this is, according to that renowned scholar, the natural explanation of the occurrence of their names, in verses 5 and 6 respectively of the inscription (Fleet—No. 35), dated the year 589 (expired) of the tribal constitution of the Mālavas, i. e. the expired Gupta era 213. Bereft of rhetorical embellishments, verse 5 simply states in substance that Yaśodharman was a *janendra* ("chief among men"), who had begun to acquire fame in battle, by himself plunging into the army of his enemies, whose reputations were eclipsed by his valorous deeds. The next verse again describes the other king as *narādhipatiḥ* ("the king of men") and as a conqueror in war (*ājau jitī*), who had already acquired the supreme title of *rājādhirāja-parameśvara*, so difficult of attainment, by subjecting, by policy peaceful and militant, the very mighty kings of the east and many kings of the north. This king's minister, Abhayadatta, is described as having formerly held office in the tract of country, bounded by the Vindhyas and the Pāriyātra mountain and the (eastern) ocean. From this panegyric on Vishṇuvardhana it seems very probable that Yaśodharman was then rising into prominence under the supremacy of Vishṇuvardhana, who is to be regarded as the former's suzerain, and not *vice versa*, as supposed by Mr. Allan. Some of the enemies, opposed by both

51 Allan, *Indian Coins, Gupta Dynasties*, Introduction, pp lv-lx

Vishṇuvardhana and and Yaśodharman, were certainly the Hūṇas, who could no longer retain the tracts of land (in the west), over which they had shortly before established their power, and which they had also ruled for some time as kings. But the kings of the east, who were brought under subjection by Vishṇuvardhana, were probably feudatories of Bhānugupta, who was still ruling in the eastern provinces. The Vishṇuvardhana-Yaśodharman inscription (Fleet No. 35) comes, it seems, a little earlier in point of time than the other two Mandasor inscriptions (Fleet—Nos. 33-34) which state in a most exalted manner the heroic actions of Yaśodharman, who is said to have compelled even King Mihirakula to pay him homage by touching his feet with the forehead. If this statement is taken as literally true, Yaśodharman may have completely humbled the power of the Hūṇa chief some time after 533-34 A. D., and then proceeded towards the eastern province, where the supremacy of Bhānugupta (or his successor, if he had any) was still continuing. It may not be quite unlikely that Vishṇuvardhana and Yaśodharman at first combined together, to drive away the Hūṇas under Mihirkula from the parts of the western provinces which were under Hūṇa sway, and then brought under subjection some of the Gupta feudatories in the east. But ultimately perhaps, by the superior strength of his arms, Yaśodharman overpowered his former suzerain Vishṇuvardhana and acquired the title of a universal sovereign (*saṁrāṭ*, V. 3, Fleet No. 33). Hence it may be supposed that it was Yaśodharman, who usurped all the Gupta territories and brought about the actual

downfall of the Gupta empire. It would be difficult in any other way to justify the panegyric, which contains Yaśodharman's boast (V. 4. Fleet No. 33), that he enjoyed those countries, which were not in the possession of the all-powerful Gupta sovereigns, and which the power of the Hūṇa kings, who kept many a tributary king under subjection, could not penetrate, or the high-sounding expressions (V. 5, Fleet No. 33) that the *sāmantas* (feudatories) of the different parts of the land, from the Lauhitya (the Brahmaputra) in the east to the Western Ocean, and from the Himālayas in the north to the Mahendra Mountain in the south, did him honour. It is, therefore not improbable that Yośadharman overthrew Mihirkula some time after 533-34 A. D., and declared himself independent sovereign of Northern India. But the different account of the overthrow of Mihirakula, given by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang, according to whom his tyranny was ended by Bālāditya (identified with Narasiṁhagupta of the Bhitari seal inscription, who belonged to the branch line of the early Guptas), makes it difficult to explain satisfactorily the story of the Mandasor inscriptions referred to above. According to the Chinese pilgrim, this Bālāditya, a king of Magadha, whose territory was invaded by Mihirakula, succeeded in defeating and taking him prisoner, but afterwards released him; and the Hūṇa chief's ultimate fate was that he took refuge in Kashmere, where he made himself ruler. These two conflicting stories of the defeat of Mihirakula, as related in the inscriptions and in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim, have caused scholars to offer many suggestions regarding the

truth. According to the late Dr. Vincent Smith[52] "the native princes under the leadership of Bālāditya, king of Magadha (the same as Narasiṁhagupta), and Yaśodharman, a *rājā* of Central India, appear to have formed a confederacy against the foreign tyrant". But Mr. Allan,[53] following the view of the late Dr. Fleet[54] that "Mihirakula was overthrown by Yaśodharman in the west, and by Bālāditya in the direction of Magadha", suggests that "Narasiṁhagupta (i.e. the Bālāditya of Hiuen Tsiang) was simply successful in defending Magadha against Mihirakula's aggressions, and that Mihirakula was afterwards utterly routed and takan prisoner by Yaśodharman". The boastful statements about Yaśodharman in the Mandasor inscriptions lead us to believe that it was this powefül king, who succeeded in finally breaking the Hūṇa power in India, declared himself independent *saṁrāṭ* of all Northern India and made his supremacy felt by the representatives of both the branches of the imperial Gupta dynasty, still in possession of some power in the east, as well as by the Maukharis. Very likely Bhānugupta or his successor, if he had any, who may have retained some power in Puṇḍravardhana especially, and also Bālāditya, or his successor Kumāragupta III, acknowledged the authority of Yaśodharman. The rise of Yaśodharman was, therefore, the cause of the downfall of the imperial Gupta rule in Northern India. This king of Mālava may have continued to rule as a North-

52 Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd Edition,. p. 318.

53 Allan, *Indian Coins, Gupta Dynastics*, Introduction, p. lix.

54 *Indian Antiquary*, 1889, p. 228.

Indian *saṁrāṭ* even after the complete downfall of the Guptas by the middle of the sixth century A. D. No successor of Yaśodharman is, however, known, whereas we have epigraphic records of a local dynasty of eleven Gupta rulers in Magadha, beginning with Kṛshṇagupta and passing through Mādhavagupta (Harsha's contemporary) to Jīvitagupta II, who continued to rule as local chiefs in Magadha till about the middle of the eighth century A. D., probably till the rise of the Pāla Kings of Bengal, who brought Magadha also under their rule.

Chapter V

The Maukhari Dynasty

Before entering into particulars regarding the career of kings of the Maukhari dynasty, which attained a high political position in North-Eastern India in the sixth century A. D., we should first attempt to trace its origin. General Cunningham secured a clay seal at Gayā, inscribed in Mauryan Brāhmī script, bearing the legend *Mokhalinaṁ* (=Maukharīṇāṁ). The term Mukhara or Maukhari is believed to be very old. The Maukharis may have originally belonged to the country of Aṅga or South Bihar, as is evident from the Barābar and Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscriptions[1] of the time of Anantavarman. The group represented by the three chiefs Anantavarman, his father Śārdūlavarman and his grand-father Yajñavarman, of these inscriptions, is earlier than the other group of Maukhari kings, who ruled the Ayodhyā region of the modern United Provinces. Both these groups probably belonged to the same stock. Harshavardhana's court-poet Bāṇa also hints that the family of the Maukharis was very old, and highly esteemed by all contemporary kings and people. In *Harshacharita*[2] we find use of both the terms Mukhara and

[1] Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 48 and 49-50 respectively.

[2] Cf. the phrases *Pushpabhūti-Mukhara-vaṁśau* (Chap. IV, p. 72, Kane's ed.) and *sakala bhuvana namaskṛto Maukhari-vaṁśaḥ*, *Ibid*, p. 69.

Maukhari.[3] That the usual form of the family-name is Maukhari is evident from its use in one of the introductory verses (v. 4) of Bāṇa's *Kādambarī*. In the former book Bāṇa writes of the union of the two brilliant lines of Pushpabhūti and Mukhara, "whose worth like that of the sun and the moon is sung by all the world to the gratification of wise men's ears". As Pushpabhūti was the remote ancestor of the Vardhana family of Sthāṇvīśvara, so Mukhara was probably the originator of both the Varman families of South Bihar (Gayā) and United Provinces (Ayodhyā and Kanauj). The Mukhara princes are said in the Harahá inscription[4] of Īśānavarman's time to have descended from the family of king Aśvapati of the house of Vaivasvata Manu. Hence the Maukharis claim their decent from the solar race. They were, however, Śaiva ("*māheśvara*") by religion.

The sources which may profitably be utilised for gathering a history of the Maukhari chiefs and kings are their inscriptions and coins, Bāṇa's *Harshacharita* and the Buddhist treatise the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*.

Of the three princes, Yajñavarman, his son Śārdūlavarman and the latter's son Anantavarma of the Gayā group of the Maukharis, made known to us by

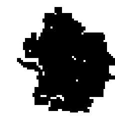
[3] Another form *Maukhara* is found in the Jaunpur stone inscription (Fleet No. 51) of King Iśvaravarman.

[4] Verse 3 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 110 ff. A king of Madra (located by Varāhamihira in the N.W part of India) bears the same name, Aśvapati But it does not seem probable that the Maukharis had any connection with him as Pandit Hirananda Śāstri thinks.

the Barābar and Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscriptions the first two enjoyed the status of a *sāmanta* (vassal) ruler. This is indicated by their use of the title *nṛpa* which indicates their lower political position of vassalage. The recoıds being undated, we have no certain knowledge as to the paramount lords in the east, to whom they might have owed their allegiance. Palaeographically these insciiptions aıe placed by scholars[5] earlieı than 554 A. D., the date of the Haraha inscription. In all probability they were feudatories under the last imperial Gupta monaıchs. However, the first chief Yajñavarman of this branch is described as celebıating many saciifices which appear to have then fallen into desuetude *(ishta-samṛddha-yajñamahimā)*, and as teaching all other ıulers the duty of the warıioı caste *(kshatra-sthiter=ddeśikah)*. He attained gıeatness by ıestoıation of these time-honouıed institutions. In ıespect of wisdom, high descent, libeıality and prowess he surpassed other ıuleıs, but yet he preseıved a tıanquil mind, through possession of modesty. His son Śārdūlavaıman, is metioned as *sāmanta chūḍāmaṇi*, establishing his fame by many waıs with hostile kings who, however, cannot be rightly identified. It seems, however, undoubted that on the decline of the adminis-tıative glory of the imperial Guptas in East India, these vassal kings began to assert their independence and extend their political supıemacy by fighting with their neighbours. That this second *sāmanta's* son Anantavarman was of the greatest help to his father, in dealing with his enemies, is evident from his

[5] e g. Mr. N. G. Majumdar, in *I. A.* 1917.

epigraphs. His skilfulness in archery is much stressed therein, as it wrought havoc among the elephant and horse troops of his enemies. But this prince is not referred to in these inscriptions as ever ruling as a *sāmanta* chief. Probably the rise of other and greater political powers, in the eastern provinces, was responsible for the extinction of this eastern family of Maukhari *sāmantas* ; and prince Anantavarman had therefore no opportunity to assume rulership even as a feudatory chief, with the use of the lesser appellation on *nṛpa* only with his name. Their vassalage could not have lasted for more than half a century. This Anantavarman and his father and grand-father were not probably sectarian Hindus, as the first is credited with installing the image of the god Kṛshṇa in one cave-temple and those of Śiva-Pārvatī (probably in their *Ardhanārīśvara* form) and Pārvatī alone, under the names of Kātyāyanī and Bhavānī, in others. These meritorious acts of prince Anantavarman were performed by him during the life-time of his father.



The family of the second group of the Maukharis, whose territories lay in the Upper-Ganges valley, specially in and near the modern districts of Barabanki, Fyzabad and Jaunpur in U. P., was founded by a chief named Harivarman. The inscription[6] on the copper-seal discovered in Asirgadh (in C. P.) gives a genealogy of these Maukharis down to the fifth king in the following order :

6 Fleet, *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 47.

1. (Mahārāja) Harivarman = Jayasvāminī (Bhaṭṭārikā-devī)
I
2. „ Ādityavarman = Harshaguptā „
I
3. „ Īśvaravarman = Upaguptā „
I
4. (Mahārājādhirāja) Īśānavarman = Lakshmīvatī(?) (Bhaṭṭārikā-mahādevī)
I
5. „ Śarvvavarman

We cannot confidently connect these Mukharis with Asirgadh, the place of discovery of the seal, situated in the Nimar district of C. P. Their kingdom appears to have lain some hundreds of miles to the north-east in U. P. It is of course not very easy, in the absence of any geographical data, even in the Haraha inscription of Īśānavarman's time, to ascertain exactly the part or parts of the country that this king or his predecessors governed. It is quite reasonable, however, to believe that in the first half of the sixth century A. D., during the troublous times of the empire under the later imperial Guptas, due to the inroads of the Hūṇas and the rise of Yaśodharman of Mālava, the first three Maukhari rulers, who had only the use of the title *mahārāja*, indicative of their feudatory position, held sway in the Ayodhyā region.

The first *mahārāja* Harivarman, *alias* Jvālāmukha brought other kings under subjection by the dual policy of prowess and affection. He is credited to have employed his royal authority in regulating the

different *varṇas* and *āśramas*. This may rightly be taken as a clear hint of the historical fact, that there arose some social and religious disorder in every part of North-Eastern India during this period. The fourth ruler of this line is found in these epigraphic records to have been the first to assume the imperial title of *mahārājādhirāja*. The second and third Maukhari *mahārājas* married princesses of the Gupta lineage. Harshaguptā, queen of Ādityavarman, was probably the sister of King Harshagupta of the Later Gupta family of Magadha, as scholars are apt to think. Dr. H. C. Ray Choudhury thinks,[7] quite plausibly, that such matrimonial relation with the Guptas in this period stimulated imperial ambition. We find that such ambition first embodied itself in the person of Iśvaravarman. The fragmentary nature of the Jaunpur inscription makes it impossible to refer, with any certainty, the historical information gleaned from it, to Īśanavarman or to any of his descendants. Both the father and grand-father of Īśvaravarman are described[8] therein as having descended from the flourishing lineage of the Mukhara kings" (*udayini Mukharāṇāṁ bhūbhujām=anvavāye*). Ādityavarman strictly observed the regulations for the right conduct of the *varṇas* and *āśramas* and offered many a sacrifice to the gods. The strictly orthodox Hindu sacrificial customs were also followed by his son, *mahārāja* Īśvaravarman, who possessed all the virtues expected in a king of the warrior caste. It is from the reign of this latter king that the Maukhari conquests began

7 *Vide* his *Political History of India*, p. 305.

8 Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 51. (cf. vv. 4 5).

to be achieved. It is stated that this mighty king had to secure the throne by "allaying the troubles of his subjects that were created by the approach of cruel people." There is a clear reference, in a verse of this epigraph, to a defeat sustained by an Andhra king, about whom the description runs, that out of fear of the Maukhari king, this lord of the Andhras was forced to take shelter, in one crevice after another in the Vindhya mountains. *(Vindhyāddreḥ pratirandhram=Andhrapatinā saṁkāparen=āsitaṁ).* In the same verse there is a reference also to the Raivataka mountain in Surāshṭra (Kathiawad) ; but it is not clear if the Maukhari king had to proceed thither, or any king of that place, proceeded towards the Maukhari realm and met defeat. There is in the next verse another description, though unfortunately injured by the mutilation of the stone, of the warriors of the Andhra army, "whose arms were studded with the lustre of (their) swords drawn out (of the scabbards)". The late Dr. Fleet found a reference to the city of Dhārā in verse 9 of this epigraph, but in our opinion there is no allusion to any place name there. In all likelihood the word *dhārā* refers to the edge of a sword used by the Maukhari king (?), from which sparks of fire came out *(dhārā-mārgga-vinirgatāgni-kaṇikā)*. The next verses indicate the advance of the Maukhari king's army towards the Himālayan regions. In this connection a natural query arises as to who this king was, whose war-like exploits were directed against the Andhras, and probably also the Surāshṭra people. Mr. N. G. Majumdar's opinion,[9] that the defeat of the

[9] *I. A.*, 1917, p. 127.

Andhra king is to be regarded as happening during the reign of Īśvaravarman, appears to be quite reasonable. He also thinks that the glorious campaign of conquests of this king's son Īśānvarman "preceded his sitting on his father's throne". If that view be correct, it is Īśvaravarman[10] who must be taken as the first Maukhari king who paved the way to the imperial status, afterwards enjoyed by his illustrious son Īśānavarman and his grand-son Śarvvavarman.

The first imperial sovereign of the Maukhari dynasty was Īśānavarman, whose date is now definitely known to scholars from the most important document of the period, the Haraha stone-inscription[11] referred to above, which records the rebuilding, by one of his sons, Sūryyavarman by name (not known from any other document), of a dilapidated Śiva-temple in the year 611, believed by all scholars to refer to the Vikrama era, and therefore corresponding to 554 A. D., when the Maukhari king (Īśānavarman) was ruling in full glory after vanquishing all his foes. That the country was really plunging into social and political chaos, and this great monarch had to make all efforts to restore order, is clear from the court-poet describing the then earth as resembling "a cracked boat" (*sphuṭitanauḥ*) which he "saved from sinking

10 Dr. R. K. Mookkerji in his *Harsha*, p. 58, (fn 2) writes that Īśvaravarman was the first Maukhari "to have attained an imperial status." Had it been so, he would certainly have been described in his grandson Śarvvavarman's seal as a *mahārājādhirāja* instead of a *mahārāja* only—the former status being achieved by his son Īśānavarman for the first time.

11 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XIV, pp. 110 ff.

by means of the ropes (*guṇas*) of his kingly virtues. He is, moreover, described as a great warrior, who scored three great victories in three different directions, viz. over the Andhra king, the Śulikas and the Gauḍas. According to some scholars these victories had been achieved by Īśānavarman during the life-time and reign of his father, whom he might have assisted in the wars directed against these people. But it may be argued that if the exdedition against the Andhra king by his father, Īśvaravarman, referred to above, was really an unsuccessful operation, his son might have led a second expedition, after having ascended his father's throne some time before 554 A. D. In any case these three victories of this Maukhari ruler made it easier for him to assume lord-paramountcy. The Haraha inscription gives a vivid description[12] of them, stating that the victorious Īśānavarman occupied the throne after having defeated the lord of the Andhras, who had "thousands of three-fold rutting elephants", vanquished the Śūlikas who had "a cavalry of countless galloping horses", and made the Gauḍa people take shelter towards the sea-shore, "after causing their land territories to be deprived of their future prospects". It is difficult to identify this Andhra king who, in the opinion of Dr H. C. Ray

[12] Cf. V. 13 which runs thus:—

"जित्वान्ध्राधिपतिं सहस्रगणित-त्रेधा-क्षरद्वारणां

व्यावल्गन्नियुतातिसंख्यतुरगान् भङ्क्त्वा रणे शूलिकाम् (न्) ।

कृत्वा चायतिमोचितस्थलभुवो गौडान् समुद्राश्रया-

नध्यासिष्ट नतक्षितीशचरणः सिङ्गा (सिंहा) सनं यो जिती ॥"

Choudhury[13] of the Calcutta University, was probably Mādhavavarman II of the Vishṇukuṇḍin family, who "crosssed the river Godāvarī with the desire to conquer the eastern region". Neither is it very easy to identify the Śūlika people in this inscription. It is, however, generally agreed by scholars that they must be connected with the Śaulika country, mentioned along with other South-easterly countries, viz. Kośala (undoubtedly South Kośala), Kaliṅga, Vaṅga, Upavaṅga, Vidarbha, Vatsa, Andhra, Chedi etc. by Varāhamihira, the almost contemporary astronomer, in his *Bṛihatsaṁhita.*[14] Dr. Ray Choudhury and following him Dr. R. K. Mookerji[15] think that these Śūlikas were probably the Chālukyas, and they point out in this connection the name of Kīrtivarman I of the Chalikya dynasty (as the name is spelt in the Mahākūṭa pillar inscription), who gained victories over the kings of Vaṅga, Aṅga, Magadha etc. We cannot also definitely conjecture who were particularly meant by the Gauḍa people in this inscription. To us it seems that the use of this term (Gauḍa) in the Haraha inscription is the earliest in old inscriptions discovered in Eastern India, although Varāhamihira[16] (who died in 587 A. D.) mentions it in his work as

13 *Op. Cit* p. 304

14 *Vide* XIV, 8. In the same treatise XI, 7 and XIV, 23 (Vaṅgavāsī ed. Calcutta) we meet with the name *Śulika* itself as associated with some countries in the W, N-W and N. But considering the Maukhari ruler's expedition towards the east, it seems more reasonable to identify the *Śūlikas* with the South-easterly countries of Varāhamihira.

15 *Harsha*, p. 54, fn. 2.

16 *Op. Cit.* XIV, 7.

Gauḍaka, immediately followed by the name Pauṇḍra amongst the countries in the east. It may be suggested that during the sixth and seventh centuries A. D. the Gauḍa kingdom had its capital in Karṇasuvarṇa in Central Bengal. We know that *mahārājādhirāja* Jayanāga once had his head-quarters in Karṇasuvarṇa and thence issued a copper-plate grant[17] belonging, in our opinion based on its palaeography, to the latter half of the sixth century A. D. There is curiously enough a clear mention in the Buddhist work *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[18], of a Gauḍa king whose name ended in *Nāga* and began with *Jaya*, which means that it was Jayanāga. It may be believed that Jayanāga and his son, who ruled only for a few months (as the Buddhist work narrates), preceded Śaśāṅka as kings of Karṇasuvarṇa. A guess may be ventured, that the Maukhari Īśānavarman probably drove the Gauḍa people towards the sea-shore, after having forced them to quit their land territories in Central Bengal, during the reign of the "Gauḍarāja" Jayanāga. Of course further discoveries must be awaited for the corroboration of such a view. The epithet *nata-kshitīśa-charaṇaḥ*, applied to Īśānavarman in the same verse, signifies that on the results of these conquests the three kings of the Andhras, Śūlikas and Gauḍas recognised his imperial suzerainty. Thus the political power of the Maukharis grew enormous in Uttarāpatha.

Inscriptional records bear witness to another most important historical fact that the Maukharis and the

17 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XVIII, pp. 60 and ff.

18 Gaṇapati Śāstri's ed.—Chap. 53, p. 636.

Later Gupta family of Magadha bore a relation of hereditary feud between themselves. The fourth king of the latter family, Kumāragupta, thought that the possibility of his attainment of suzerain power depended largely on his ability to keep in check the growing power of the Maukharis, specially during the rule of Īśānavarman. Hence that king of Magadha is credited by the poet of the Apshad inscription[19] of Ādityasena, to have churned, acting as a veritable Mandara mountain, "that formidable milk-ocean, the cause of the attainment of fortune, which was the army of the glorious Īśānavarman, a very moon among kings". The Maukhari forces had a troop of ponderous and mighty rutting elephants, which the king used in his battle against the Magadhan army under Kumāragupta. It is also related in the same inscription that the mighty army of the elephants of the Maukharis which formerly succeeded in threwing aloft in battle the troops of the Hūṇas, was broken up by Kumāragupta's son and successor king Dāmodaragupta who, however, himself fell in that battle. This description indicates that the Maukhari chiefs, presumably some of the predecessors of Īśānavarman, with their elephant troops had often to confront the Hūṇa armies and had on some occasion or occasions inflicted on them crushing defeat. It seems to us that the king of Magadha was successful in the first battle against Īśānavarman, but his son met defeat at the

19 Fleet—*C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 42. cf. the lines in v. 8:
"भीमः श्रीशानवर्म्मक्षितिपतिशशिनः सैन्यदुग्धोदसिन्धु-
र्लक्ष्मी-संप्राप्तिहेतुः सपदि विमथितो मन्दरीभूय येन।"

hands of the Maukhari army in the second. The victory over Dāmodaragupta may have been scored either by Īśānavarman himself or by his son Śarvvavarman. Anyhow the Maukhari family was gradually gaining supremacy in Magadha too. We have seen above that Īśānavarman was succeeded on the throne by his son Śarvvavarman, who is also styled in the Asirgadh seal inscription a paramount sovereign bearing the imperial title *mahārājādhirāja*. This Maukhari king was one of the "previous" rulers, who had one after another confirmed the grant of a village to a sun-god under the name of Varuṇasvāmin, the continuance of which was recorded on a pillar, by means of a royal charter[20] of king Jīvitagupta II, of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha.

There is numismatic evidence of the political supremacy, weilded in Eastern India at least by the three Maukhari kings, Īśānavarman, Śarvvavarman and Avantivarman. A hoard of coins, belonging to the reign of these kings (9, 6 and 17 in number respectively), was discovered in the Fyzabad district. According to Mr. Burn,[21] one of Śarvvavarman's coins bore a date-figure representing 58, and some of his father Īśānavarman's the figures 54 and 55, and some of Avantivarman's those of 67 and 71. It is indeed quite probable, that a Maukhari era was started sometime about 499-500 A. D., in imitation of the Gupta era, from the time when Īśvaravarman began to establish supremacy over kings of distant lands, by means of his conquests.

20 *Ibid.* No. 46.

21 *J. R. A. S.*, 1906.

A second son of Īśānavarman, of the name of Sūryyavarman is found mentioned in the Haraha inscription whence it is learnt that this prince was in the enjoyment of full youth in 554 A. D., when his notice was attracted, while he was out a-hunting, by the dilapidated condition of the old temple of Śiva, which he caused to be reconstructed. There is as yet no epigraphic or numismatic document to indicate that this Sūryyavarman was ever a reigning monarch in the Maukhari list. Pandit Hirananda Śāstri[22] thinks that this prince, either predeceased his father in case he was the eldest son, or was a prince younger than the heir-apparent (Śarvva). Dr. Ray Choudhury[23] has drawn the attention of scholars to a prince of the name of Sūryyavarman, who is described in the Śivpur stone-inscription of Mahāśivagupta as "born in the unblemished family of the Varmans, great on account of their *ādhipatya* (supremacy) over Magadha". This, however, contains information of the birth only of this prince in the Varman family and not of his position. If this Varman family is taken to refer to the Maukhari dynasty and Sūryya is identified with the Maukhari prince of that name mentioned in the Haraha inscription, even then we cannot be sure that Sūryyavarman ever ruled as a king having political jurisdiction anywhere. If the identifications are correct, it may be thought that the Maukhari Varmans took possession, though temporarily, of Magadha, which they probably succeeded in occupying after Dāmodaragupta's defeat

22 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XIV, p. 111.

23 *Op. Cit.*, p. 305, fn. 1.

by the Maukhari king. This view may find support from the discovery of some seals containing the name of Īśānavarman at Nālandā in South Magadha.

With the present stock of our knowledge we cannot ascertain the relation between Śarvvavarman, the last king in the Maukhari list, obtained from the Asirgadh seal, and *parameśvara* Avantivarman, mentioned in the Deo-Baranark inscription,[24] as one of the early kings, who had confirmed the grant of the village to the sun-god referred to above. A suggestion may be offered that in case Avantivarman, whose coins, hitherto discovered, cover the period from 566 to 570 A. D., was a direct descendant of the line to which Śarvvavarman belonged, he was probably the latter's son. But from the fact that Avantivarman's eldest son Grahavarman, the famous Maukhari king and son-in-law of king Prabhākaravardhana of Sthāṇvīśvara (Thaneswar), was ruling from Kanauj before 606 A. D., the year of Harshavardhana's ascension to the Vardhana throne, it appears that Avantivarman had removed his seat of government a little westward to the famous city of Kanauj. The rising political power of the Vardhana house of Pushpabhūti was responsible for a matrimonial union between itself and the famous Maukhari lineage. The manner in which Bāṇa[25] has described the settlement and actual celebration of the marriage, performed at Thaneswar between Avantivarman's son Grahavarman, and Prabhākaravardhana's dauther Rājyaśrī, clearly indicates that the bridegroom's father was not alive at the

24 Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III., No, 46.

25 *Harshacharita*—Chap. IV.

Chapter VI

The Later Guptas of Magadha

In the present chapter will be described the history of another eastern dynasty of rulers, usually called by scholars "the Later Guptas of Magadha" comprising eleven members, who mostly wielded political power as local rulers of Magadha, during a period of about two hundred and fifty years, from the early part of the sixth century A. D. to the middle of the eighth. It is very likely that after the extinction of the branch line of the imperial Guptas ruling in Magadha (in South Bihar, in our opinion), i. e. after the death of Kumāgupta III, Kṛshṇagupta, the founder of the new dynasty, at that time a local chief, found an opportunity to assert his supremacy in Magadha. At this time the other parts of the imperial Gupta empire in Eastern India, including Tirhut and Puṇḍravardhana, were still under the direct administration of the latest imperial Gupta emperors. In the foregoing chapter it has been stated, that the first three Maukhari chiefs held feudatory position during the period of decline of the Gupta kings of the imperial main line in the first part of the sixth century A. D., when the empire passed through troublous times, on account of fresh Hūṇa inroads, as well as the threatening rise of the Mālava chief, Yaśodharman. The gradual weakening of the Gupta power made their feudatories in the different parts of the country cherish a feeling of rivalry and hostility

among themselves, through their desire fo) Prayāga supremacy. It was during such a time that theation[4] as or three members of this family of the Later G.King were struggling to extend their ruling authority. rama

The Apshad inscription[1] of Ādityasena givesinto genealogy of these Gupta rulers for eight generations, from Kṛshṇagupta to Ādityasena; and the Deo-Baranark inscription[2] of Jīvitagupta II supplies us with names from the seventh ruler Mādhavagupta to the eleventh generation hitherto known. In the first epigraph the first *nṛpa* Kṛshṇagupta is described as being victorious over countless enemies, by crushing whom he rose to eminence. It may be supposed that these enemies were the princes of the neighbouring States, who made efforts to assert their own power over one another. His army had a vast troop of elephants. Dr. H. C. Ray Choudhury[3] is inclined to think that Yaśodharman was one of his enemies. His son, the next king Harshagupta, was a valiant warrior who offered a great resistance in terrible battles to those of his enemies, who foolishly refused to tolerate the goddess of Royalty favouring him. This fact clearly indicates that the power of the new Magadhan house was gradually growing. This chief had a record of glorious triumph in many battles. After him ruled his son, King Jīvitagupta I, the crest-jewel amongst kings (*Kshitīśa-chūḍāmaṇiḥ*), who was a terror to his proud enemies. He performed warlike exploits, some of which were of such a super-

[1] Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III., No. 42, pp. 200 ff.

[2] *Ibid*, No. 46, pp. 213 ff.

[3] *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 303.

ıracter (*atimānushaṁ karma*), that for a long ..ɛy were regarded with astonishment by all 4nd. Historical significance may be attributed : court-poet's description that this king's valour .sed "terrible scorching fever (of fear)" to his great (*uchchaiḥ*) enemies, which the latter could not shake off even though they lived on the cool sea-shores or in the Himālayan regions. Very probably we shall have to indentify these enemies living on the sea-shores with the Gauḍas and the Vaṅgas of the period, and the Himālayan enemies with the people of Nepal under one of the Lichchhavi rulers. It has been related above, that the Gauḍa people were forced by the Maukhari Īśānavarman, in the middle of the sixth century, to quit their homes and seek shelter near the sea-shores. The Later Guptas probably succeeded in extending their political influence and jurisdiction over some portions of Bengal, specially towards the east and the south of Magadha. It has been noticed before, that the army of the great Maukhari king Īśānavarman, who at one time led a conquering expedition in all directions, was defeated in action by Jīvitagupta's son and successor Kumāragupta, whose military strength and leadership in battle were well-known, and who always thought that no attainment of suzerain power was possible, without keeping the growth of Maukhari supremacy in check. It may reasonably be argued that these kings tried to establish a North Indian empire on the model of the imperial Guptas. A sad occurrence is clearly hinted in the Apshad inscription regarding Kumāragupta, who entered into a fire "kindled with

dry cow-dung cakes" after having gone to Prayāga (Allahabad). Was it a case of self-immolation[4] as a sacred rite, just like the one performed by King Śūdraka, the alleged author of the Sanskrit drama *Mṛchchhakaṭika*, who embraced death by leaping into a sacrificial fire? Or, was it a natural death that he died at Prayāga, where only the usual funeral rites were performed? It may not seem improbable that the king advanced towards Allahabad from Magadha in order to meet the army of the Maukharis.

The fifth king of the dynasty was Dāmodaragupta, son of Kumāragupta. He is reputed[5] to have split the heavy Maukhari army consisting largely of an array of mighty elephants, which had formerly kept at bay the Hūṇas; but unfortunately he himself fell in the battle. One of the most remarkable benefactions of this king was that he helped hundreds of virtuous Brāhmaṇas in giving away their daughters in marriage, by himself presenting rich dowries of *agrahāra* grants. After Dāmodaragupta's defeat, there was cessation of hostility for some time between these two conflicting eastern powers.

But at this time the Magadhan house had to reckon with a rising eastern power, namely the Varman kings of Kāmarūpa. Dāmodaragupta's illustrious son Mahāsenagupta, described as "the foremost amongst warriors who acquired in all assemblages of heroes,"

[4] Such death in fire or water was not rare in India. King Rāmapāla of Bengal, for instance, died by a dive into the waters of the Ganges.

[5] *Vide ante*, Chap. V, on the Maukhari dynasty, pp. 114-115.

a reputation of first rank for heroism, achieved a glorious victory in war over Susthitavarman. The court-poet[6] graphically narrates in the epigraph, that the lofty fame marked by words of praise for this victory is "even to this day," i. e. about half-a-century after the battle, constantly sung on the banks of the river Lauhitya (the Brahmaputra). It seems very curious, that following a genuine mistake, committed by the late Dr. Fleet, when he took Susthitavarman to be a member of the Maukhari dynasty, long before the discovery in 1913 of the Nidhanpur plates of Bhāskaravarman, king of Kāmarūpa, some of our Indian colleagues[7] have endorsed the same view. But the clear mention, in the inscription, of the name of the river Lohitya or Lauhitya, should have set at rest any doubt about the identity of the king, who must be taken as the father of Bhāskaravarman mentioned both in the *Harshacharita*[8] of Bāṇa and the Nidhanpur copper-plate grant.[9] It is, therefore, apparent that there was no frie… political relation between the Magadhan Guptas an… Varmans of Kāmarūpa. There was, on the other hand, a very cordial association between the Varmans of Kāmarūpa and the Vardhana family of Thaneswar. From the Sonpat seal inscription,[10] as well as the Banskhera[11]

6 *Cf.* the words of the sentence in v. 14—"श्रीमत्-सुस्थितवर्म्मयुद्ध-विजय-श्लाघा-पदाङ्कं मुहुर्यस्याद्यापि...लौहित्यस्य तटेषु...स्फीतं यशो गीयते ॥"

7 e. g. Dr. R. K. Mookerji in his *Harsha*, p. 65.

8 *Vide* Parab's edition of the book, p. 220, where the name is wrongly spelt as Susthiravarman.

9 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XII, pp. 65 ff. (v. 18).

10 Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 52, p. 231.

11 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 208.

and Madhuvana[12] copper-plates of Harshavardhana, we find that the name of the mother of Prabhakaravardhana, the first paramount sovereign of Thaneswar, was Mahāsenaguptā, who was married to *mahārāja* Ādityavardhana. It seems quite likely that she was a sister of king Mahāsenagupta of Magadha, and thus it may be believed that the Vardhana and the (Magadhan) Gupta dynasties entered into matrimonial connection with each other. Hence it was not unnatural for Mahāsenagupta's son Mādhavagupta, who was Prabhākaravardhana's maternal cousin, to have approached Harshavardhana (mentioned as Harshadeva in the Apshad inscription) for alliance. The good traits of Mādhavagupta's character are fully dwelt upon in that epigraph. It is stated there that besides "finding pleasure only in prowess," this king was "the leader of those who acquire renown in war, a very store-house of goodness, the best of those who excel in the collection and bestowal of riches, the natural home of wealth truth and learning, and a firm bridge of religion." The sphere of his political influence was extensive, and when he was successful in killing his foes and averting danger to his kingdom, his own people did him obeisance out of gratefulness. The most significant incident of his reign was his approach to Harsha, who was then attaining lord-paramountcy in the whole of Northern India, for alliance. This he did, after having uprooted his enemies by fighting them in battle, certainly with a view to strengthen his dominance in Eastern India. His idea of becoming an ally of Harsha is referred

12 *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 67.

to in the inscription thus : the hero (Mādhavagupta) having determined in his mind that "his mighty enemies have been slain" by him "in battle" and that "there remained nothing more" for him "to do", desired to enter into an alliance with Harsha. It is not clear who these enemies of Mādhavagupta were. In all probability they were the kings of the eastern countries, including Kāmarūpa, of which the king (Susthitavarman) had already been defeated in battle by his father Mahāsenagupta. It does not seem quite proper to assume that Mādhavagupta became a *subordinate* ally of the Vardhana house; his position rather was very high and independent in Magadha. This view may explain correctly why his son Ādityasena, perhaps the most prominent member of the Later Gupta dynasty, was successful, after the usurpation of the Vardhana throne by Arjuna, a minister of Harsha, and his defeat by a Chinese envoy, helped by the armies of Tibet and Nepal, shortly after the emperor's death in 647 A. D., in asserting his independence as a paramount sovereign. His father's position was already high and he himself made his own higher. The way in which the military capacity of this king is described, in eight verses (unfortunately in mutilated condition) in his own stone-inscription leaves no doubt, that during the period of confusion and anarchy in Northern India immediately after the death of Harsha, this Magadhan ruler succeeded in bringing other States under his own royal subjection. The epithet applied to Ādityasena as "a guardian of the world, by whose white umbrella the whole circuit of the earth is covered" (*śvetātapatra-*

sthagita-vasumatī-maṇḍalo Lokapālah), may be taken in its literal sense in this connection. The other epithet which suggests that "the darting fire of the prowess of (his) feet has the locks of hair on the tops of the heads of all (other) kings thrown into it" (*ayastāśesha narendra-mauli-chalana - sphāra - pratāpānalah*) is not less significant. There is no doubt that his kingdom comprised some eastern countries, including those on the sea-shore. His fame as an imperial sovereign crossed over even to the other side of the ocean (*[illegible]*).

There is an inscription[1] in the Vaidyanātha temple, most probably brought away from some building on the Mandara Hill in the old Aṅga country, which records the installation of the image of the god Nṛhari (Man-lion incarnation of Vishṇu) in a temple, which king Ādityasena with his queen Śrī-Koṇadevī (apparently wrongly deciphered as Koshadevī by Fleet), caused to be erected on that hill. Here an image was also set up of Varāha (the Boar-incarnation of Vishṇu), by a person named Balabhadra, who might have belonged to a much later age, when gold coins were called by the name of *chāmīkara-ṭaṅkaka*. But what is of great historical importance in this epigraph is the description of King Ādityasena, who is stated to have been "a ruler of the (whole) earth upto the shores of the oceans", and "the performer of the *aśvamedha* and other great sacrifices". The Apshad (Gayā district), the Shahpur (Patna district)

[13] Fleet C. I. I., Vol. III, pp 212 213, Foot note—the inscription ending with the words—*iti Mandara-giri-prakaraṇaṁ*

and the Mandar (Bhagalpur District) inscriptions show that *mahārājādhirāja* Ādityasena's kingdom consisted not only of Magadha but also of Aṅga. But we must remember that neither Mādhāvagupta nor Ādityasena could live in Pāṭaliputra, for we learn from Hiuen Tsiang[14] that there "now nothing but the old foundations remain." The extension of his conquests towards the shores of the ocean suggests that Bengal, specially the southern Rāḍhā and Vaṅga might have come under his domination. That during the next three generations the Later Guptas continued to enjoy sovereign power, in this large kingdom as established by Ādityasena, and also in the valley of the Gomatī river (in Arrah and other districts), till the middle of the eighth century A. D., is clear from the Deo-Baranark inscription,[15] issued from the royal camp at Gomatī-*koṭṭaka* by Jīvitagupta II. In that inscription the next three kings after Ādityasena are also found using the imperial titles of *paramabhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja*. We know of only one date, the year 66 (believed to be of the Harsha era) i. e. 672 A.D., that certainly belonged to the reign of Ādityasena, one of whose high military officers *(balādhikṛta)*, named Sālapaksha, made a religious gift in the *agrahāra* of Nālandā, situated in the neighbourhood of Shahpur, the place of dicovery of the inscription.[16] The genealogy after Ādityasena runs down to three more kings, viz. Devagupta, his own son Vishṇugupta and the latter's son Jīvitagupta II, bearing the two imperial

[14] *Life* (Beal). p. 101.

[15] Fleet *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 46.

[16] *Ibid*, No. 43.

titles *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja*; but they were all *parama-māheśvara* by religion. Some antiquarians regard this Magadhan Vishṇugupta as identical with the Vishṇugupta who bears the *āditya* title *Chandrāditya* in the coins.[17] The Kendur plates[18] refer to a king of Northern India having the epithet *sakalottarāpatha-nātha*, who, it is said, was defeated by the Chālukya kings, Vinayāditya (about 680-696 A. D.) and Vijayāditya. It may be conjectured that this Northern Indian king was either Ādityasena himself, or his son Devagupta. During the last quarter of the seventh century A. D., the Later Gupta kings held undisputed sway not over Magadha alone, but also other parts of Northern India, as has been shown above. Dr. H. C. Ray Choudhury has pointed out that from the records of the Western Chālukyas of Vātāpi, it could be easily inferred, that there existed a "pan-North Indian empire, in the last quarter of the seventh century A. D.", and that the last few Later Gupta kings probably attempted to carve out such an empire.

The Chinese traveller I-tsing referred to the Corean traveller, named Hwui Lun,[19] coming to India by the sea-route, during the latter half of the seventh century, and writing in connection with a temple built by king Ādityasena near an old one in Mahābodhi thus :— "Recently a king called Sun-army (Ādityasena), built by the side of the old temple another which is now

[17] Allan, *Gupta Coins*, p. 145.

[18] *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol I, Pt. II, pp. 189, 368, and 371.

[19] *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang* (Beal)—Introduction pp, xxxvi-xxxvii.

newly finished. Priests from the south occupy this temple". He also wrote about another temple of which only the foundations remained when he visited it, called "the Tchina (China) temple", thus—"Tradition says that formerly a Mahārāja called Śrīgupta built this temple for the use of Chinese priests. He was prompted to do so by the arrival of about twenty priests of that country, who had travelled from Sz'chuen to the Mahābodhi temple to pay their worship. Being impressed by their pious demeanour, he gave them the land and the revenues of about twenty villages as an endowment. This occured some 500 years ago. The land has now reverted to the king of Eastern India, whose name is Devavarman, but he is said to be willing to give back the temple-land and the endowment in case any priests came from China". From this historically accurate description it is clear, that this king Devavarman, whom the contemporary Corean pilgrim found ruling in Eastern India, and possessing the right of disposal of land in Mahābodhi, must be identified with Devagupta, son of Ādityasena of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. Dr. R. C. Majumdar's[20] identification of this king with Devakhaḍga of Eastern Bengal seems to be unwarranted although the two kings, Devavarman (*alias* Devagupta) of Magadha ,and Devakdaḍga of East Bengal might have been contemporary or nearly so.

It appears clear from the description of the Prakrit epic, the Gaūḍavaho ("The Slaughter of the king of

[20] *Early History of Bengal* (Dacca University Bulletin, 1924), p. 23.

Gauḍa ") composed by Vākpatirāja, who flourished during the reign of king Yaśovarman of Kanuaj, sometime in the middle of the eighth century, as a contemporary of the poet Bhavabhūti, that the Gauḍa king must also have been *Magaha-nāha* (Lord of Magadha). Dr. Ray Choudhury's conjecture, that the Later Gupta line of Magadha "was probably finally destroyed by the Gauḍas, who could never forgive Mādhavagupta's desertion of their cause", is not quite convincing, because at the time Gauḍa and Magadha formed a single kingdom, and the same ruler was both Gauḍādhipa and Magadhanātha. It was this Gauḍa-Magadha king, in all probability the last ruler of the Later Gupta line Jīvitagupta II, who is described in that Prakrit epic[21] as fleeing from Magadha, leaving that country at the mercy of the victor, when the ambitious Yaśovarman approached towards him. The Eastern people of Gauḍa and Magadha compelled their sovereign to face the adventurer from Kanauj, but unfortunately the eastern Indian king fell a victim to his western enemy, who succeeded in overrunning the whole of Bengal and Bihar upto the sea-shore. Thus ended a great Eastern Indian empire, after having played a short-lived part in history. The anarchy that followed this event led to the gradual rise of the Pāla kings of Bengal, who ruled over an extensive Eastern empire for several centuries.

21 *Vide* vv. 414-417 of the poem (Bombay Sanskrit Series) pp. 119-120.

Chapter VII

The Amalgamated Kingdom of Karṇasuvarṇa and Puṇḍravardhana under Gauḍādhipa Śaśāṅka

It has been suggested in a previous chapter, that during the sixth and the seventh centuries A. D. the Gauḍa kingdom had its capital at Karṇasuvarṇa, which scholars identify with Rāṅgāmāṭi, a place situated in Northern Rāḍhā and on the western bank of the river Bhāgīrathī, near Berhampur,' and that it included within its boundaries Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti (North Bengal). Vaṅga-Samataṭa i.e. South and East Bengal remained, of course, a separate political entity. But in the eighth century and probably later, the term Gauḍādhipa meant that the ruler was not only the King of North and Central Bengal, but had also the appellation of Magadhanātha, Magadha forming a part of the Gauḍa kingdom at that time. In the present chapter will be described the history of the Gauḍa kingdom i.e. the amalgamated kingdom of Karṇasuvarṇa and Puṇḍravardhana under Śaśāṅka and Jayanāga.

The sources utilised for gathering the history of Śaśāṅka consist chiefly of :—(1) the accounts of the Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang (Yuan Chwang) as we find in his *Records* and *Life*, (2) the historical romance *Harshacharita* of king Harshavardhana's court-poet Bāṇa, (3) some of the epigraphic and numismatic

records of the times, and (4) the *Bodhisattva-piṭakāvataṁsaka* or *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. The 53rd chapter (Paṭalavisara) of this last treatise contains interesting and important materials for the ancient history of the various parts of India. The accounts of kings and people, given in this unique treatise of Mantric texts, are found recorded, just as we find in the Brāhmanic Purāṇas, in a prophetic manner, as if the events described would be happening in future. The names of kings are often mentioned in a very abbreviated from (e. g. Rakārādya and Hakārākhaya, kings standing for Rājyavardhana and Harshavardhana respectively), and sometimes given in synonyms instead of in their originals (e. g. Somākhya for Śaśāṅka).

After the gradual decadence of the glory of the Imperial Gupta dynasty, on account of the incessant inroads of the White Hūṇas upon the empire, and its complete overthrow by Yaśodharman of Mālava, towards the middle of the sixth century A. D., the imperial title of a universal sovereign (*saṁrāṭ*) was assumed by that ambitious prince, after he had successfully usurped all the Gupta provinces and Hūṇa territories, and declared himself independent emperor of Northern India. This fact has already been referred to in a previons chapter in the exalting words of his own court-poet (Vāsula). After the unknown end of this monarch, the empire of Northern India, which he tried to consolidate, again broke up into several parts, each becoming independent with their respective rulers. So the Vardhana family of Sthāṇvīśvara (Thaneswar), the Maukharis of Ayodhyā and Kanauj, the Later Guptas af Magadha and the

people of Gauḍa gradually increased their power, and prepared themselves for enterning into a contest for paramount supremacy in Northern India. The kings of Mālava in the south-west and Kāmarūpa (Assam) in the extreme east were not also sitting idle at the time as mere on-lookers.

All rulers of the Vardhana and Maukhari dynasties before Prabhākaravardhana and Īśānavarman respectively used the title of *mahārāja*, implying that they were simply local chiefs (whether or not they owed any allegiance to any liege-lord) ; and it is these two kings who first used the paramount title of *mahārājādhirāja*. They were making conquest of neighbouring and distant lands, and by defeating the rulers of those places were trying to bring them under their own vassalage. During the latter half of the sixth century A. D. we find the kings of these various dynasties entering into battle against each other. King Kumāragupta of the Later Gupta family fought a battle against the Maukhari king Īśānavarman, whose army he completely routed. A little later his son, Dāmodaragupta also had to fight against a Maukhari ruler, but he died on the battle-field. Still later, we find another conflict between Mahāsenagupta (son of Dāmodaragupta) of Magadha and a Kāmarūpa king named Susthitavarman (father of Bhāskaravarman), in which the latter sustained a heavy defeat. We also know from the famous Apshad Stone Inscription of Ādityasena that this Mahāsenagupta's son Mādhavagupta made an alliance with Harshavardhana of Thaneswar, probably to fortify himself against his Kāmarūpa and other eastern enemies. It appears

very probable that since the time when Īśānavarman, during a clash with Kumāragupta of Magadha, proceeded, as we learn form the Haraha inscription of this king dated 554 A. D., up to North Bengal (Gauḍa proper), and compelled the Gauḍa people to escape towards the sea wiping off the future hope regarding their landed properties *(Kṛtvā ch=āyati-mocita-sthalabhuvo Gauḍān samudrāśrayān")*, the Bengali people lost their previous hold over North Bengal ; and the Bengal kings reigning in the latter part of the sixth century did not wield much political influence there. All such influence that we find to have ever been exercised by *mahārājādhirājas* Dharmāditya, Gopachandra and Samāchāradeva was confined mostly to East, South and Central parts of Bengal (i. e. Samataṭa, Karṇasuvarṇa, etc) and was scarcely felt in North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana). It was at a time, when a race was thus being run by the chief ruling houses in Northern and Eastern Indian provinces, for achieving paramount suzerainty, that Śaśāṅka, mentioned by Yuan Chwang as the king of Karṇasuvarṇa in Eastern India, extended his political jurisdiction by occupying North Bengal, and later assumed the lofty title of Gauḍādhipa. *Harshacharita* tells us that during this time (about the last quarter of the sixth century A. D.) Prabhākaravardhana of Thaneswar also made extensive conquests in all directions, by fighting successfully against the Hūṇas, and also the kings of Sindhu, Gurjara, Gāndhāra, Lāṭa and Mālava. Bāṇabhaṭṭa informs us that Prabhākara once entrusted to his eldest son, the crown-prince Rājyavardhana, then 18 years old, an expedition, in the company of

his hereditary ministers and loyal feudatories, against the Hūṇas. In describing the setting of the sun and rising of the moon on that terrible day on which, on arrival at the royal court, Rājya met his younger brother Harsha, then aged only about 15 years, and learnt of the untimely death of the monarch and their mother, Bāṇa makes an allusion to the gradual rise into eminence of king Śaśāṇka's *maṇḍala* (or circle of political jurisdiction). Nowhere in the whole of this book has Bāṇa made a clear mention of the name of the Gauḍādhipa, who was an inveterate enemy of his patron king's family, except in the following sentence where, like the rise of the moon, the rise into political prominence of Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa, has been noted, though in a veiled manner, in a few words involved in puns. The passage runs thus :—

"प्रकटकलङ्कमुदयमानम्... .....अकाशताकाशे शशाङ्कमण्डलम् ।"

(Chap. vi).

"The rising political circle or sphere of (king) Śaśāṅka was attaining prominence in the (political) horizon (of India), but with its infamy manifested (before the world)". There is sly hint in many passages of *Harshacharita*, that the political power of this Bengal king could not be steady, as he could not attain greatness because of his mean character and cowardice. Bāṇa emphatically, but in a covert way, gives the cause of the unsteady nature of Śaśāṅka's royalty which, according to him, was "not to last in its perfect fullness for more than two days", like the beauty of the moon in the sky. He says :—

"कातरस्य तु शशिन इव हरिणहृदयस्य पाण्डरपृष्ठस्य कुतो द्विरात्रमपि निश्चला लक्ष्मीः ।"

(Chap. vi).

So Śaśāṅka is here described as possessing "as timid a heart as that of a deer" and also being insincere, though outwardly honest and pure.

Who this Gauḍādhipa Śaśāṅka was is a puzzling question to historians. Yuan Chwang has described Śaśāṅka as the "recent" king of Karṇasuvarṇa. A commentator of *Harshacharita* has also given the Gauḍādhipa the same name, but the late Dr. Bühler mentioned (in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 70) that in one manuscript of *Harshacharita* the name of the Gauḍa king is stated as Narendragupta. Fitz-Edward Hall expressed his opinion that the king was a descendant of the Gupta family (whether Imperial, or Later, not being of course mentioned). The second of the three gold coins (the first being undoubtedly of Śaśāṅka), discovered in 1852, along with several others belonging to some of the Imperial Gupta rulers, in a village in the district of Jessore, bears the legend, *Narendravinata*, inscribed on its reverse side. According to Allan, this coin also belongs to Śaśāṅka. Mr. N. K. Bhattasali reads on the obverse of this coin the name Samāchāradeva, on the strength of which, as well as the bull-emblem used therein, he feels inclined to connect Śaśāṅka with the family of Samāchāradeva of East Bengal. The late Mr. R. D. Benerjee, however, tried to prove with somewhat greater force of argument based on numismatic evidence, that Śaśāṅka's second name was Narendra-

gupta, and he thought that he was probably either a son or nephew (brother's son) of King Mahāsenagupta of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. Dr. R. K. Mookerjee went a step further, and accounted for Śaśāṅka's combination against Rājya with the king of Mālava, by saying that he had blood-relationship with the latter, both being of the Gupta lineage. The late Mr. Banerjee also referred to the opinion of some numismatist, who held that the inscription on the alleged Śaśāṅka coins reads Narendrāditya; and he inferred, with some degree of probability, that Śaśāṅka, like the former Imperial Gupta rulers enjoyed a second name with an *āditya* title. I have in this connection to offer a suggestion that the compound word "*durṇarendr=ābhibhava-roshitaḥ*", meaning "enraged by the humiliation offered by that wicked Narendra", used by Bāṇa as an adjective to Harshavardhana, refers under the garb of a pun to Śaśāṅka. The allusion involved in the epithet had been used by the poet, when he described Harsha as having flown into a terrific rage, on hearing of the treacherous murder of his elder brother Rājyavardhana by the Gauḍa king. He compares Harsha with a snake (*āśīvisaḥ*) who is also "*durṇarendr=ābhibhava-roshitaḥ*" i.e. whose anger has been excited by the repulse of a snake-charmer (Narendra). In the case of Harsha the word *Narendra* may mean either simply a 'king' or 'a person of that name', but in either case it refers to King Śaśāṅka. It will not be out of place here, if we try to connect Śaśāṅka with another king of Karṇasuvarṇa, named Jayanāga, one of whose copper-plate inscriptions was published by

Dr. Barnett.[1] In that epigraph, written in characters of the well-formed upright Gupta type, prevailing in the latter half of the sixth century A. D., the king is described as possessing the epithets *Mahārājādhirāja* and *Paramabhāgavata*. The seal of this plate contains in an effaced condition the standing figure Lakshmī or Śrī with two elephants making *Kumbhābhisheka*. As Dr. Barnett remarks, we know nothing of any king of the name of Jayanāga from other sources. But in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* we find a clear mention not only of a Gauḍa king of the name of Jayanāga ruling at such a time, but also the name of a city called Udumbara (*Māgadhāṁ janapadāṁ prāpya pure Udumbarāhvaye*), probably wrongly located here in Magadha (some portion of which might have also been included in the Gauḍa kingdom), which is mentioned in this copper-plate grant as being the name of a *vishaya* of which the administrator was Jayanāga's *sāmanta* called Nārāyaṇabhadra. A verse in the Buddhist book runs thus :—

"नागराजसमाह्वयो गौडराजा भविष्यति ।
अन्ते तस्य नृपे तिष्ठं जयाद्या वर्णातद्विधौ ॥"

The author, as it appears from the loose Sanskrit of the book, means to declare in the usual prophetic strain, that there will be a Gauḍa king, whose name will commence with the syllables "*Jaya*" and end in "*Nāga*." It is clear then that Jayanāga, who is referred to in the above inscription as ruling in Karṇasuvarṇa is described as a Gauḍa king in this Buddhist treatise, just as Śaśāṅka is mentioned by

[1] *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XVIII, pp. 60 ff.

the Chinese traveller as king of Karṇasuvarṇa, but at the same time described both by Bāṇa and the author of this Buddhist work as a king of Gauḍa. We may now plausibly identify those coins (as has been suggested to Dr. Barnett by Mr. Allan), which resemble to a very great extent those of Śaśāṅka, but bear the abbreviated name Jaya on the obveıse, and a seated Lakshmī with an elephant sprinkling water on her on the reverse, as belonging to king Jayanāga of this inscription and the Buddhist work. The '*Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* makes Jayanāga almost a successor of Śaśāṅka, but in our opinion he and his son (stated to have reigned for a few months only) preceded Śaśāṅka as kings of Karṇasuvarṇa, at a time when Prabhākaravardhana or his father Ādityavardhana was ruling as a king of Thaneswar. The Maukhari king Īśānavarman probably drove the Gauḍa people towards the sea-side during Jayanāga's reign. It cannot be stated definitely that Śaśāṅka had no blood-relationship with this Jayanāga of central Bengal, and used only an *āditya* title, viz. *Narendrāditya* in the manner of the ancient Imperial Gupta monarchs. But this can only be more positively proved to be a historical fact by further discoveries, for which we must wait. Śaśāṅka might have been a Gupta or a Nāga, or neither of the two.

Let us now examine how far Śaśāṅka succeeded in extending the sphere of his political influence. Though he had his first administrative centre established in Karṇasuvarṇa, he gradually extended his power by occupation of Puṇḍravardhana in the north, and some places in South Bihar e. g. Gayā, Rohitāśva-

giri (or Rhotas hill) even up to Benares in the west, and the whole country, in the south, up to Koṅgoda province, situated in the modern Ganjam district, south of Orissa[2]. But we must remember that at first Śaśāṅka was a feudal chief having the use of the title *Mahāsāmanta* only (used sometimes by smaller kings in place of the title *Mahārāja*), as is evidenced by the inscription cut in reverse, found at the hill-fort of Rhotasgadh in the Shahabad district. It is a stone-mould or matrix for casting copper-seals in relief, meant to be attached to copper-plate charters. It bears the inscription *Śrīmahāsāmanta—Śaśāṅkadevasya*, the letters belonging to the 6th-7th century A. D. We are also told by the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* that the heroic king Soma (i. e. Śaśāṅka) will rule over the Gangetic valley up to Benares. This extension of his dominion and influence must have taken place before he came into conflict with king Harsha. Within about a decade after this conflict. i. e. in Gupta era 300, or 619 A. D. we find Śaśāṅka a powerful mornarch enjoying an imperial rank, having feudal rulers acknowledging his suzerainty. For, we learn from the Ganjam copper-plate of *Mahārāja-mahāsāmanta* Mādhavaraja II, of the Śilodbhavakula, granting a village to a Brāhmaṇa. on the occasion of a solar eclipse in 619 A. D. (the charter having been issued from the seat of the provincial government in Koṅgoda

[2] The late Mr. R. D. Banerjee writes (*Vide* his *History of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 127) that "certain ruins associated with the name of Śaśāṅka in the Midnapur district tend to show that Śaśāṅka's dominions extended from the Northern part of Murshidabad district to that of Balasore".

on the river Śālimā), that he was the provincial ruler in that region under the suzerainty of *Mahārājādhirāja* Śaśāṅka, who was then ruling "on the earth encircled by the girdle of waves of the four oceans and containing islands, towns and ports[3]."

So we see that Śaśāṅka was wielding great power as Gauḍādhipa with right to the use of the epithet *Mahārājādhirāja*, at least, up to the year 619 A. D.

In his glorious days Prabhākaravardhana of Thaneswar was able to keep the king of Mālava (probably Devagupta, and *not* Śilāditya of West Mālava as suggested by Dr. R. K. Mookerjee) in check, and on one occassion compelled him to lend the services of his two sons, Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta, as companions of Rājya and Harsha, their other intimate companion being their maternal uncle's son, Bhaṇḍi. Owing to Prabhākara's great political power, the Maukharis remained somewhat in submission to him for, we find him giving his daughter Rājyaśrī, in marriage with Avantivarman's son, king Grahavarman, then ruling in Kuśasthala or Kānyakubja (Kanauj). But it appears that the Mālava king was not very obliging to Prabhākara, and that he always harboured a spirit of rebellion. When Prabhākara died of fever and the news reached the ears of Śaśāṅka, he became anxious to enter into an alliai

ded

[3] Cf. the phrase:— ence.

"चतुरुदधिसलिलवीची-मेखलानिलीनायां सद्वीप-नगर-पत्तनवत्यां stab-
न्धरायां गौसाब्दे वर्षशतत्रये वर्तमाने महाराजाधिराज-श्रीश d his
शासति।" north,

Epigraphia Indica, Vol. hitāśva-

with the king of Mālava, in order to overthrow the kingdom of Thanesvar and, if possible, become the emperor of Uttarāpatha (Northern India). As soon as the news[4] of Prabhākara's death spread, the Mālava king proceeded towards Kanauj, killed its king Grahavarman and threw his wife Rājyaśrī into a dungeon, putting iron fetters on her feet, as if she were a brigand's wife. Bāṇa further refers to the report that the Mālava king was planning an attack on Thaneswar also, for he thought that Prabhākara's demise had left the army of Thaneswar without a leader. On hearing of the disaster which had befallen his sister, Rājyavardhana placed Harsha in charge of the administration of the kingdom, and himself started, taking only Bhaṇḍi with him and a troop of ten thousand cavalry, to give battle to the Mālava king. Long after, a cavalry officer delivered to Harsha the message of the murder of his brother by the king of Gauḍa, who was no other than our Śaśāṅka.[5]

This messenger told Harsha that, his brother (Rājyavardhana) had easily subdued the army of the Mālava king and that his trust had been increased

[4] Cf. "यस्मिन्नहनि अवनिपतिरुपरत इत्यभूद्वार्ता तस्मिन्नेव देवो ग्रहवर्म्मा दुरात्मना मालवराजेन जीवलोकमात्मनः सुकृतेन सह त्याजितः। भर्त्तृदारिकाऽपि राज्यश्रीः कालायसनिगडचुम्बितचरणा चौराङ्गना इव संयता कान्यकुब्जे कारायां निक्षिप्ता।"

Harshacharita, Chap. vi.

[5] Cf. "तस्माच्च हेलानिर्ज्जितमालवानीकमपि गौडाधिपेन मिथ्योपचारोपचितविश्वासं मुक्तशस्त्रमेकाकिनं विश्रब्धं स्वभवन एव भ्रातरं व्यापादितमश्रौषीत्।"

Harshacharita, Chap. vi.

by a show of false civilities by the Gauḍa king. Then unarmed and alone he had approached his enemy but had been slain by the king of Gauḍa in his own camp. We shall now examine whether Śaśāṅka did really assassinate Rājyavardhana 'treacherously.' Bāṇa has very cleverly avoided giving a clear account of the reason for Rājya's acceptance of an invitation for going to the camp of such a powerful adversary as Śaśāṅka. It has been stated before that the Bengal king combined with the Mālava king after Prabhākara's death, and the first fruit of this political alliance was the death of Grahavarman caused by the Mālava king. It is more likely that the alliance of these two kings took place after the death of Grahavarman. After this, Rājya and Bhaṇḍi marched against, defeated and captured the Mālava king. It is not clear from Bāṇa's description whether the Mālava king was killed by them in action. On the presumption that the Mālava king's alliance with Śaśāṅka took place after the death of Grahavarman, it may be suggested that the Bengal king, after such an alliance, left Bengal and laid siege to the Maukhari capital Kanauj, and in that connection committed the foul murder of Grahavarman's brother-in-law, king Rājyavardhana, who had only recently succeeded to the throne of Thaneswar, and was thinking of annexing more dominions to his already extensive hereditary kingdom. It seems that this murder of Rājya took place in or near Kanauj. Bāṇa says that a raid was made by the Gauḍa king and his followers on Kuśasthala or Kanauj. At this time Rājyaśrī, who had been kept enchained in the dungeon of her own capital by

the Mālava king, was rescued by a Gupta nobleman, who seems to have been a kind-hearted person, though a partisan of the Mālava or the Gauḍa king. Or it may be that this Gupta *kulaputra* was a friend of the Maukhari family. After her release Rājyaśrī heard of her brother's murder and then fled away towards the Vindhya forests. The Mālava king occupied the town of Kanauj after killing Grahavarman, and kept close vigilance on the ex-queen, but he was made to leave the city by the forces of Rājya and Bhaṇḍi. In the meantime, Śaśāṅka proceeded towards Kanauj, rather to join the Mālava king on the way or to wrest the kingdom from the hands of Rājya who was now in charge of his sister's kingdom. We have remarked before that Bāṇabhaṭṭa did not clearly state why Rājya accepted the invitation of Śaśāṅka for coming over to his camp. It is quite clear from Bāṇa's record that Bhaṇḍi was not with Rājya, when the latter was invited by Śaśāṅka. Bhaṇḍi had already been sent back by Rājya[6] to Thanesvar with all the booty, including the whole force and royal equipage of the Mālava king. On his being asked by Harsha,[7] Bhaṇḍi

[6] *Cf.* "पश्यतु देवः श्रीराज्यवर्द्धनभुजबलार्जितं साधनं सपरिबर्हं मालवराजस्य"।

Harshacharita, Chap. vii.

[7] *Cf.* "समतिक्रान्ते च कियत्यपि काले भ्रातृमरणवृत्तान्तमप्राक्षीत्। अकथयच्च यथावृत्तं भण्डिः। अथ नरपतिस्तमुवाच—'राज्यश्रीव्यतिकरः कः। स पुनरवादीत्—'देवभूयं गते देवे राज्यवर्द्धने गुप्तनाम्ना च गृहीते कुशस्थले देवी राज्यश्रीः परिभ्रश्य बन्धनाद् विन्ध्याटवीं सपरिवारा प्रविष्टा इति लोकतो वार्त्तामश्रृणवम्। अन्वेष्टारस्तु तां प्रति प्रभूता प्रहिता जना नाद्यापि निवर्तन्ते' इति। तच्चाकर्ण्य भूपतिरब्रवीत्—'किमन्यैरनुपविभिः

related later on that he had only heard from people of Rājyaśrī's rescue and flight towards the Vindhya forest. Elsewhere also[8] it is narrated, that during the raid by the Gauḍa king either on Kanauj or on a kingdom near about it, she was rescued by a nobleman named Gupta. We agree with Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda[9] in the view that Rājya at first defeated the Mālava king, then sent back his cousin Bhaṇḍi to Thanesvar, and then marched towards Kanauj to effect the release of his sister. But we cannot accept the Rai Bahadur's view, which has been supported by Dr. R.C. Majumder,[10] that Rājyavardhana was possibly "defeated in a fair fight" and subsequently killed by Śaśāṅka while in a captive state. Had it been a case of death in a fair fight,[11] Harsha probably would not have started on an expensive and elaborate expedition again Śaśāṅka at this tender age. He undoubtedly

यत्र सा तत्र परित्यक्तान्यकृत्यः स्त्रयमहं यास्यामि। भवानपि कटकमादाय प्रवर्त्ततां गौडाभिमुखं' इत्युक्त्वा चोत्थाय स्नानभुवमगात्"।

Harshacharita, Chap. vii.

[8] *Cf.* भुक्तवांश्च बन्धनात् प्रभृति विस्तरतः स्वसुः कान्यकुब्जात् गौड-संभ्रमे गुप्तितो गुप्तनाम्ना कुलपुत्रेण निष्कासनं, निर्गतायाश्च राज्यवर्द्धन-मरणश्रवणं, श्रुत्वा चाहारनिराकरणं, अनाहारपरिहतायाश्च विन्ध्याटवी-पर्य्यटनखेदं, जातनिर्व्वेदायाः पावकप्रवेशोपक्रमणं यावत् सर्व्वमश्रृणोत् व्यतिकरं परिजनतः।"

Harshacharita, Chap vii.

[9] *Gauḍarājamālā* (Varendra Research Society's publication, Rajshahi), pp. 8-10.

[10] *Early History of Bengal*, p. 17. (Dacca University Bulletin).

[11] The late Mr. R. D. Banerji, however, thinks (*History of Orissa*—Vol. I, p. 126) that Rājyavardhana II "himself was killed in a duel in the camp of the king of Gauḍa."

obtained ready help from his vassals and other independent rulers, because of his appeal to them against the treachery committed by the Bengal king. There was no record of any fight fought between Rājya and Śaśāṅka, and it may be presumed that after the Mālava king's defeat by the enormous army of Rājya, Śaśāṅka did not consider it expedient to enter into an open fight. Both these writers are reluctant to hold the view that there was at all any treachery played by Śaśāṅka in killing Rājyavardhana, inspite of the clear accounts of both Bāṇa and Yuan Chwang. Dr. Majumdar remarks that we should "revise the opinion about Śaśāṅka as handed down by the historians." The spirit of Bāṇa's work is to give vent to his patron king Harsha's, as well as his own, wrath against Śaśāṅka for his foul action. It is only on account of his treachery that Bāṇa gives him contemptuous epithets like *Gauḍādhama* and *Gauḍabhujaṅga*. Mr. Chanda and Dr. Majumdar think that it was not possible for Rājya to have entered his enemy's camp with his weapons laid aside (*muktaśastra*). Let us in this connection refer to a very significant passage in the *Harshacharita* in which Harsha declares that none but the Gauḍa king, who was a designer of black courses (*Kṛshṇavartmaprasūtiḥ*) could lay low such a king with past records of undissembling heroism to his credit, when he was unarmed. The passage runs thus :—

"गौडाधिपमपहाय कस्तादृशं महापुरुषं ततुत्रया एव निर्व्याजभुजनिर्जित-
समस्तराजकं मुक्तशस्त्रं कलसयोनिमिव कृष्णवर्त्मप्रसूतिरीदृशेन सर्व्वलोक-
विगर्हितेन मृत्युना शमयेदार्य्यम्।"

(*Harshacharita*, Chap. vi)

The poet here alludes with the help of puns to the stratagic death of Droṇa (*Kalasayoni*) who laid aside his arms and was forthwith killed by Dhṛshṭadyumna (*Kṛshṇavartmaprasūti*, lit born of sacrificial fire). This is also a case of treacherous slaying engineered by Kṛshṇa.

From the statements of Bāṇa we find that neither Harsha nor Bhaṇḍi knew clearly about the allurement offered by Śaśāṅka to Rājya. Bāṇa in his book collects a series of historical and other traditional instances of political murders, brought about by enemies, by taking advantage of the foolishness or inadvertence on the part of murdered kings. These illustrations were placed before king Harsha, by one of his trusted and able officers, named Skandagupta, for his careful consideration on the eve of his preparation for an expedition against Śaśāṅka. He was specially requested "to dismiss universal confidingness", so agreeable to the habits of the people of Thanesvar, and springing from their innate frankness of spirit. The officer states thus :—

"तदियमात्मदेशाचारोचिता स्वभावसरलहृदयजा त्यज्यतां सर्व-विश्वासिता"।

(*Harshacharita*, ch. vi)

He cites these cases of "disasters due to carelessness" and lays special stress upon "the blunders of heedless men on account of women". He would perhaps not have invited the special attention of Harsha to them, unless Bāṇa was conscious that Rājya's own death must have been due to a cause which involved his heedless action concerning some

woman. An old commentator of the *Harshacharita* (Śaṅkara by name), while explaining the two introductory verses of the sixth chapter, speaks of Śaśāṅka as the murderer of Rājya and says that he enticed the Vardhana king through a spy by the offer of his daughter's hand. He adds that while the unlucky king with his retinue was participating in a dinner[12] in his enemy's camp, he was killed by the Gauḍa king in disguise. A famous verse in Harsha's own royal grants[13] (the Banskhera and Madhuvana copper-plates issued in the 20th regnal year i.e. in 626 A.D.) states that Rājyavardhana, after having defeated his enemies, and made Devagupta and others captive, gave up his own life in his enemy's camp, where he went to keep his word of honour (*satyānurodhena*). It is quite plausible, that during a period of truce the offer of the hand of his daughter to Rājyavardhana was made by Śaśāṅka, and lest Rājyavardhana's heedless compliance with such an invitation sent through a messenger should tarnish the reputation of the king, Bāṇa refrained from giving full details of this incident in his book. But the poet did not fail to remind Harsha that his elder brother acted foolishly in placing confidence

12 The commentator says :—"अनेनोच्छ्वासार्थः संगृहीतः। तथाहि, कृतोऽन्तो विनाशो येन स शशाङ्कनामा गौडाधिपतिः। शूराणां राज्यवर्द्धनानुचराणां तत्सहितानां संग्रहमकरोत्।.........तथाहि शशाङ्केन विश्वासार्थं दूतमुखेन कन्याप्रदानमुक्त्वा प्रलोभितो राज्यवर्द्धनः स्वगेहे सानुचरो भुञ्जमान एव छद्मना व्यापादितः।"

13 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. IV, pp. 210-211; and *ibid*, Vol. VIII. pp. 155-160.

in the false courtesies of Śaśāṅka. The Chinese traveller, Yuan Chwang, has also narrated that Rājyavardhana, "soon after his accession was treacherously murdered by Śaśāṅka, the wicked king of Karṇasuvarṇa in East India, a persecutor of Buddhism". So there ought not to remain any doubt about Bāṇa's statement that Śaśāṅka, inspite of his greatness as a conqueror, adopted a very vile and treacherous method of killing Rājyavardhana. We do not also feel inclined to support the view of Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda[14] that the Gupta nobleman's rescue of Rājyaśrī from prison was undertaken at the instance of Śaśāṅka who, in his opinion, in this affair showed a noble instinct of heart, so hard to expect during war-time. We rather think that the Gupta nobleman belonged to a family which was friendly to the house of the Maukharis or the Vardhanas or to both. Even supposing he was a partisan of Śaśāṅka, he did this noble deed at his own instance, and not at his king's bidding.

Śaśāṅka could not succeed to the throne of Thanesvar and establish his universal suzerainty in Kanauj. He had to remain very much afraid of an attack on his eastern kingdom by Harsha, who on pressing requests from the State-ministers accepted the kingship after Rājya's death. Bent on avenging his brother's murder, he started with a vast army against Śaśāṅka. He issued a proclamation through his Minister of Peace and War *(mahāsandhivigrahādhikṛta)* to all known kings, that they should either surrender

14 *Gauḍarājamālā*, p. 10.

or give him battle. When the first day's march was over, Harsha received an emissary from the court of Bhāskaravarman, king of Prāgjyotisha (Kāmarūpa or Assam), who wanted to enter into an alliance with him, and sent him innumerable presents. Harsha accepted this offer of friendship, and sent back the messenger with many presents in return. It was an alliance for their mutual good, as they were neighbouring adversaries of their common enemy, Śaśāṅka of Bengal. After Harsha had marched for a few days, he met Bhaṇḍi, who was returning with the booty obtained in his war against the Mālava king, and heard from him all in detail about his brother's murder and Rājyaśrī's escape. The king requested Bhaṇḍi to proceed against the king of Bengal, and himself entered into the Vindhya forests in search of his lost sister, whom he at last succeeded in discovering there. Harsha rejoined his camp on the banks of the Ganges. Bāṇa abruptly closes his narrative here. From his account it is clear that Śaśāṅka withdrew towards his kingdom without any success at Kanauj, which Harsha occupied and whence he administered the empire in co-partnership with his sister. Very probably, Harsha removed his own capital from Thanesvar to Kanauj, after his return from the first expedition against Śaśāṅka.

Now let us see what the results of the elaborate military expedition of Harsha against Gauḍa were. The late Mr. R. D. Banerji was of opinion that Bhāskaravarman joined Harsha during the latter's march, because he was himself hostile to Śaśāṅka, the king of Bengal. From the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, we

find that in this great campaign against king Śaśāṅka, Harsha proceeded towards East India, reached the town of Puṇḍra and caused a great havoc amongst the Bengali people. Then this Buddhist treatise sums up the results of the war in the following lines :—

"पराजयामास सोमाख्यं दुष्टकर्मानुचारिणम् ।
ततो निषिद्धः सोमाख्यो स्वदेशेनावतिष्ठतः ॥
निवर्तयामास हकाराख्यः म्लेच्छराज्येमपूजितः ।
तुष्टकर्मा हकाराख्यो नृपः श्रेयसा चार्थधर्म्मवाः ॥
स्वदेशेनैव प्रयातः यथेष्टगतिनापि वा ।"

The author here means to say that Harsha defeated Soma (Śaśāṅka), the pursuer of wicked deeds, who was forced to remain confined within his own kingdom, and prevented him from moving further towards the west ; and Harsha himself, not being honoured with welcome in these eastern frontier countries returned leisurely to his own kingdom, with the satisfaction that he had achieved victory. The late Dr. V. Smith's inference that Śaśāṅka "escaped with little loss," and that "his kingdom became subject to Harsha at a later date" appears to be correct. There is little doubt that as the result of the first campaign Harsha could not establish political superemacy over Gauḍa i. e. Puṇḍravardhana and Karṇasuvarṇa. It was probably after Śaśāṅka's death (which must have taken place sometime between 619 A. D. and 637 A. D., when Yuan Chwang travelled over Magadha and Karṇasuvarṇa) that Harsha could take entire possession of his enemy's kingdom. Hence the pilgrim referred to Śaśāṅka as a 'recent' king. Śaśāṅka enjoyed over-lordship in eastern provinces up to the Ganjam

district in the south-east, because in Koṅgoda the Mahāsāmanta Māḍhavavarman was his feudatory in 619 A. D.

That Karṇasuvarṇa was later occupied by King Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa, is indicated by the fact that the Assam king issued his royal charter (copper-plate grants discovered in Nidhanpur, Sylhet), from his victorious camp in Karṇasuvarṇa. We have shown elsewhere ([illegible], 1913) that "Harsha, after taking possession of the kingdom of his brother's murderer from his own hands at some later date (during Śaśāṅka's life time) or (after Śaśāṅka's death) from those of his unknown successor, might have made it over to Bhāskaravarman". If Harsha took possession of Karṇasuvarṇa[13] during Śaśāṅka's life-time, he must have done so by his second campaign, with the help of his ally Bhāskaravarman. Later on Śaśāṅka, if still alive, lost his overlordship in Koṅgoda, for the Chinese pilgrim says that Harsha led an expedition *in* 643 A.D. against this country and succeeded in extending his own dominion up to that limit. Śaśāṅka's defeat is also indicated by the gold coins which were debased by a large admixture of silver. So with his lofty aspirations Śaśāṅka achieved, in the beginning of his career, some success in estab-

[13] The late Mr. R. D. Banerji says (*History of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 129) that "there is no doubt about the fact that eventually he (Śaśāṅka) was driven out of Karṇasuvarṇa. It is quite possible that this event had taken place before the date of the Ganjam plates and at that time he had lost his possessions in Bengal and was the master of Orissa only". To us such a view seems to be doubtful indeed.

lishing an extensive Gauḍa dominion, which lasted only for 17 years and a few months and days (according to the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*). He passed away leaving probably no successor, his own kingdom of Karṇasuvarṇa slipping into the hands of the neighbouring king of Assam. The Assam kings could not retain it long, for we know how Bengal and Magadha gradually grew into a great empire under the Pāla kings about a century later. From Yuan Chwang's accounts we find that our modern Bengal Presidency was divided into a number of smaller States, *viz*, Kajaṅgala, Puṇḍravardhana, Samataṭa, Tāmralipti and Karṇasuvarṇa. The pilgrim does not mention the name of any king of these States, probably because all of them, except Karṇasuvarṇa which was subject to the king of Assam, formed parts of the empire of Harshavardhana.

Let us now proceed to examine another allegation against the character of Śaśāṅka, *viz*, that he was a persecutor of Buddhism. From the bull-emblem on his coins and Yuan Chwang's statements, it is clear that this Bengal king was a devotee of Śiva, like his Mahāsāmanta Mādhavarāja. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* calls him *dvijāhvayaḥ*, i.e. Brāhmanic, meaning thereby that he was a follower of the Brahmanic faith. Śaśāṅka had all the ill-repute of being a hater of Buddhism, almost bent on a total destruction of that faith in the places, where he went for victory. The Chinese traveller has said in one place of his accounts that king Harsha got an oracle, as it were, from the image of a Bodhisattva to the effect that he should accept the sovereignty, and

"then raise Buddhism from the ruin to which it had been brought by the king of Karṇasuvarṇa". In another place he says that "at Kuśinagara he felt distressed because by Śaśāṅka's extermination of Buddhism, the groups of brethren were all broken up". It is also narrated by the pilgrim that "in *recent* times King Śaśāṅka, having tried in vain to efface the foot-prints, caused the stone to be thrown into the Ganges". This refers to the stone with Buddha's foot-prints at Pāṭaliputra. The pilgrim further relates that at Bodh-Gayā "in *recent* times Śaśāṅka, the enemy and oppressor of Buddhism, cut down the Bodhi tree, destroyed its roots down to the water, and burnt what remained", and that the king had "the image (of Buddha) removed and replaced by one of Śiva". Because the pilgrim was himself a Buddhist, Messrs. Chanda and Banerjee could not fully rely on his statements. Mr. Chanda has also suggested that at the root of Śaśāṅka's ill-feeling towards the Buddhists was probably the fact that the Buddhists of these places in Magadha and elsewhere entered into some conspiracy with Harshavardhana against him, and he therefore wanted to punish them by such oppressive persecution. Otherwise, it is not quite possible to explain such persecution in the seventh century when followers of Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Jainism lived side by side in perfect peace and amity, almost in all places in Eastern India. The Chinese traveller refers to the existence of Buddhist monasteries side by side with Deva temples, not only in Magadha and other parts of Bengal, but also in Karṇasuvarṇa,

the capital of Śaśāṅka. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[16] also states thus in a prophetic strain : "The person Soma (=Śaśāṅka) who will be a heroic king in countries on the banks fo the Ganges even up to Benares, will destroy beautiful images of the great teacher (Buddha). Relying on the heretics he will also cause to be burnt many a holy trace (or relic). Then this irascible, greedy, self-sufficient and ill-esteemed man will break down all monasteries, gardens and shrines and also the dwellings of the Nirgranthas on earth, and thus put an obstacle to their religious profession". We think that the author of this Buddhist treatise, written approximately in the 12th century A. D., could not have cherished any special ill-feeling against Śaśāṅka, as has been ascribed by some scholars to Yuan Chwang and Bāṇabhaṭṭa. In our opinion, it will not be justifiable to exculpate Śaśāṅka from his cruel actions. We may admire his great heroism, but his impolitic and impious actions no one, much less a historian, should support.

16 Cf. "सोमाख्योपि ततो राजा एकवीरो भविष्यति ।
गङ्गातीरपर्यन्तं वाराणस्यामतः परम् ॥
नाशयिष्यति दुर्मेधः शास्तुर्बिम्बां मनोरमाम् ।
जिनैस्तु कथितं पूर्वं धर्मसेतुमनल्पकम् ॥
दाहापयति दुर्मेधः तीर्थिकस्य वचे रतः ।
ततोऽसौ क्रुद्धलुब्धस्तु मित्थ्यामानी ह्यसंमतः ॥
विहारारामचैत्यांश्च निर्ग्रन्थां वसथां भुवि ।
भेतूस्यते च तदा सर्वां वृत्तिरोधमकारक ॥"

Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa, p. 634.

We shall now state briefly the general social and economic condition of the people of Bengal and other adjoining kingdoms at the time of Śaśāṅka, as revealed in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang. The people of these parts of Eastern India lived both in villages and large towns. There were in the towns large structures made of stone and brick with artistic ornamentations, rendered more beautiful by the images of gods, both Buddhistic and Brahmanic, carved on them. In Bengal there were both Buddhist monasteries and Brahmanic Deva temples. The Buddhists in Bengal belonged to both the Hīnayāna (Sammitiya) and the Mahāyāna schools.

The north-western portion of Bengal, then known as Kajangala (Rajmahal side) was low and moist, yielding good crops. The climate was warm. The people were straightforward and esteemed learning.

North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana) had a flourishing population with tanks, residences and flowery groves[17]. Jack-fruits were available in plenty. Besides the Buddhists and the Brāhmaṇas there lived in north Bengal many Digambara Nirgranthas (Jainas)[18]. Belief in oracles was current.

Further east in Assam (Kamarupa) the same climatic condition prevailed and the people were honest, small in stature and black-looking. Their speech differed a little from that of Mid-India. Their disposition was

[17] *Vide*, Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II. pp. 182-199.

[18] This is testified by some Jain relics discovered in North Bengal and deposited in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi.

violent, but they were persevering students and were believers only in Devas and not in Buddhism. There was not one Buddhist monastery in Assam ; and those who were devoted to Buddhism had to perform their acts of devotion in secret. Even the reigning king Bhāskaravarman is described by the Chinese traveller as "a Brāhmin by caste", hinting thereby that he was also a believer in Brāhmanism. Elephants of war were available in the south-west of Assam. On the western side of Karṇasuvarṇna also, i.e. in the woods of Champā (modern Bhāgalpur) large wild elephants were found. Kongodā in south Orissa, "produced large dark-coloured elephants which were capable of long journeys"

East Bengal, then called Samataṭa, situated on the sea-side contained adherents of the Sthavira school of Buddhist monks and Digambara Nigranthas and also followers of Devas. A place of trading and commercial importance of those days was the port-town of Tāmralipti (modern Tamluk) which stood on a bay. "Rare valuables" were collected here and as it was a trade-centre, people of this place were generally prosperous. Farming in this part of Bengal was quite good, and fruits and flowers abounded ; the climate was hot and the people were rude but courageous. As regards Śaśāṅka's own centre of administration in central Bengal, viz. the country of Karṇasuvarṇa, it is described as being "well-inhabited", full of rich people and having a temperate climate. The people were men "of good character" and "patrons of learning". The adherents of Buddhism belonged to

the Sammitiya school; there were followers of various other religions with Deva temples in large numbers. In three of the Buddhist monasteries of this part of Bengal, milk-products were not taken as food in accordance with the teaching of Devadatta. By the side of the capital city was the Lo-to-mo-ti (Raktamṛittikā-Rāṅgāmāṭi) monastery which was "a magnificent and famous establishment, the resort of illustrious brethren".

The hilly country of Koṅgoda is described by the Chinese traveller as "bordering on a bay of the sea, with regular harvests and having a hot climate". The people here, are described as "tall and valorous and of a black complexion, having some sense of propriety and not very deceitful". There were in this country many towns, in which "there was a gallant army which kept the neighbouring countries in awe, and so there was no powerful enemy". "As the country was on the sea-side it contained many rare precious commodities" and the currency was "cowries and pearls".

From this general survey we can say that the Bengali people and the neighbouring inhabitants of Assam and Orissa had a high standard of culture and civilisation in the seventh century A. D.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that when the Kāmarūpa rulers in the east, the Magadha kings in the middle and the Maukhari chiefs in the near west were measuring one another's military strength, there arose in the political firmament of Bengal a moon-like king (named Śaśāṅka) with some spot in his character, who aspired to outshine all of them, but who was

ultimately forced to fade away in the glittering light of the sun-like Harshavardhana, who alone succeeded in establishing a very extensive North Indian empire, which unfortunately could not last longer than his own life, as was the case with Yaśodharman of Mālava a century before him.

Chapter VIII

Kingdom of Orissa (Uḍra-Koṅgoda-Kaliṅga)

Next we take up in this chapter the discussion of the history of the ancient kingdom of Uḍra (Orissa), Koṅgoda and Kaliṅga which conjointly passed by the name of Trikaliṅga in old days. The limited period of North-Eastern Indian history treated in this work precludes us from entering into the details of the earlier history of this region, e g. of the time when the Maurya emperor Aśoka extended his empire by a war-like campaign against Kaliṅga, or when King Khāravela and after him other kings ruled in these kingdoms, or of the period later than that of the Śailodbhava dynasty of kings. The sources of the history of this kingdom during the period are mainly the inscriptional literature of the Śailodbhava dynasty and the account of Yuan Chwang. We may have to refer occasionally to other minor sources.

The old Kaliṅga country contained within itself the south-western portion of modern Bengal (i.e. parts of the districts of Midnapur and Howrah), the whole of modern Orissa and some northern portion of the Madras Presidency, and it may, therefore, be described as the part of North-Eastern India lying on the western border of the Bay of Bengal. The late Mr. R. D. Banerji[1] writing about the topography of

[1] R. D. Banerji—*History of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 3.

ancient Kaliṅga thinks that roughly speaking the country lay in two parts viz. the tract lying between the Dāmodara and Mahānadī rivers in the north and that between the latter and the Godāvarī in the south. As regards, however, the political divisions of old Kaliṅga that distinguished writer is of opinion that the country from Midnapur to the Brāhmaṇī-Vaitaraṇī was Utkala, and the central tract "consisting of the modern districts of Cuttack, Puri, and the northern part of the Ganjam district, along with some of the small States on both banks of the Mahānadī, such as Ranpur, Nayagodh, Khandpara Daspalla, Tigiria and Athgadh, was called Tosala". He says, moreover, that "most probably the country between the Chilka lake and Mahendragiri (in the Mandasa Zamindari) was called Koṅgoda, because one of the epigraphic charters makes it clear that Koṅgada was situated in Southern Tosala". Thus between Koṅgoda and the Godāvarī delta lay the beautiful country of Kaliṅga of Yuan Chwang.

The reference to the kingdom of Kaliṅga in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the Pali *Jātakas* and the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* testifies to its existence in the early period of Indian history. It is one of the States in the eastern part of Northern India that are mentioned[2] as having continued to exist after the Kurukshetra War,—the other States being Ayodhyā, Kāśī, the Maithilas (of Videha), Bārhadrathas (of Magadha "which probably included Aṅga"). Both Pāṇini and Kauṭilya also mention the name Kaliṅga and words

[2] Pargiter—*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 293.

derived from it e.g. Kāliṅgika, referring, of course, to this country. The best class of elephants, according to Kauṭilya,[3] is produced in Kaliṅga and Aṅga, This fact is borne out by the account of Yuan Chwang[4] who writes that "the country (Kaliṅga) produced dark wild elephants prized by the neighbouring countries"; and the northern country of Koṅgoda situated to the north of Kaliṅga also "produced large dark-coloured elephants which were capable of long journeys". There was a time in Indian history when for making a journey to Kaliṅga, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and some other countries, men were enjoined by Smṛti authors to perform expiatory rites to purify themselves.

With the present stock of our knowledge of epigraphic and other historical records, it is not possible to write a connected history of the period between the fall of Khāravela's family and the rise of the Śailodbhava dynasty, From the occurrence of the Kushan type of coins in many places between the Singbhum and Ganjam districts, the late Mr. R. D. Banerji[5] thinks that along with Magadha, the Kushan foreigners conquered Orissa also. He writes—"it is quite possible that when Northern and Southern Bihar were annexed to the empire of the great Kushans, Orissa and the Eastern sea-board as far as the Rushikulyā and the Lāṅguliyā were also conquered".

We are quite in the dark regarding the history of Uḍra-Koṅgoda-Kaliṅga during the Gupta period of

[3] *Arthaśāstra*—Bk. II. Chap. II.

[4] Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II. p. 198 and p. 197.

[5] *History of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 113.

Indian history, except for some historical material found in the description of the famous campaign of conquests in Southern India (Dakshiṇāpatha) by the imperial Gupta monarch Samudragupta. In his Allahbad Pillar inscription[6], this king is described as having liberated after, capture some kings of southern India, twelve of whom have been mentioned along with the names of their kingdoms. After the name of the first king, Mahendra of Kosala (identified with the Mohākosala i.e. portions of Jubbalpur, Raipur and Bilaspur of the Central Provinces), is mentioned Vyāghrarāja (or Vyāghradeva) of Mahākāntāra (one of the southern forest countries constituting the modern tributary Orissa States). The next kings in the list are Maṇṭarāja of Korāla or Kurāla territory (probably the country round the modern lake Koleru), Mahendra of Pishṭapura, the ancient capital of Kaliṅga (now Pīṭhāpuram in the Godāvarī district), and Svāmidatta of Girikoṭṭūra (identified with Kothoor about 12 miles S. S. E. from Mahendragiri in the Ganjam district). These three kings appear to have been rulers of their respective States situated within the boundaries of old Kaliṅga. Two other kings of the south, seized and afterwards released by the Gupta conqueror, who belonged to territories lying within the the province of Kaliṅga proper according to some scholars were the chiefs named Damana of Eraṇḍapalla (mentioned as Eraṇḍapalli in the Siddhantam plates of Devendravarman of Kaliṅga), and Kubera of Deverāshṭra (a province in Kaliṅga). Some other scholars including the late Dr. Vincent

[6] Fleet *C. I. I.* Vol. III, No. 1, Text 1.19, p. 7.

Smith formerly regarded these two territories as western parts of the Deccan, viz. the Khandesh and the Mahraṭṭa country. The late Mr. R. D. Banerji[7] is of opinion that very likely the three Kaliṅga kings, Svāmidatta of Koṭṭūra, Damana of Eraṇḍapalla and Kubera of Devarāshṭra "formed a confederacy with the powerful Pallava kings of the South" mentioned in the Allahabad inscription, namely Vishṇugopa of Kāñchī (Conjeeveram), Hastivarman of Veṇgī (in the Godāvarī-Kistnā Doab) and Ugrasena of Pālakka (in the Nellore District), against the Northern Indian emperor Samudraguta, during the latter's expedition of conquests. It cannot, however, be ascertained what happened to the Kaliṅga kings or chiefs after Samudragupta had returned home from the south, or whether any other Gupta rulers of the north ever made any further attempt to conquer or annex Uḍra-Koṅgada-Kaliṅga. But there is little doubt that these tracts of land were under the political and cultural influence of the Gupta empire, or else it will be difficult to explain the prevalence of the Gupta era in some of the epigraphic documents discovered in Orissa. We know that the same era was in use in some records discovered also in Puṇḍravardhana and Samataṭa, and it was in later days also used in Nepāla and Kāmarūpa. There is evidenceof some inscriptions discovered also in Central provinces bearing dates in the Gupta era.

In addition to the Ganjam plates of Mahāsāmanta Mādhavavarman, which are dated 300 in the Gupta

[7] *Op. Cit.*—Vol. I, pp. 116-117.

era (619-20 A. D.), only another inscription[9] of Orissa may be refered to the same era and that is the Patiakella grant of *Mahārāja* Śivarāja dated *saṃvat* 283 (602-3 A.D.) i.e. only three or four years before the accession of King Harshavardhana of Thanesvar in Northern India. The copper-plate containing this inscription was discovered in the district of Cuttack in Orissa. It records the grant of a village named Taṇḍralvalu or Tuṇḍilvaluja situated in the *vishaya* of Dakshiṇa Tosalī, made on the principle of perpetual endowment (*akshayanīvī*) to thirty-nine Brāhmaṇas (some of whose names end in *svāmin* and others in *deva*) belonging to various *gotras* and *charaṇas*, by the feudatory chief, *Mahārāja* Śivarāja. The charter was issued from his residence at Varttanoka in Southern Tosalī during the reign on earth of his suzerain named Śagguyayyana (or as Dr. Sten Konow doubtfully suggested Śambhuyayya) whose titles are described as *Paramadevatādhidaivata*, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka* and *Paramamāheśvara*, born in the spotless family of Mudgala. There is also the mention of a phrase *pravarttamāna-Māna-vaṁśa-rājya-kāle*, referring to the date 283. It is, however, not clear whether we should connect the suzerain of Śivaraja with the Mānavaṁśa.

We now proceed to tell the history of the kings of the Śailodbhava dynasty of Koṅgoda, about whose chronology and events definite information can be gathered from several inscriptions belonging to some

[9] *Epi. Ind*, Vol. IX, No. 40, p. 285 ff.

of its rulers. These records, so far as they belong to the period under our notice in this work, are as follows : (1) the undated Khurda copper-plate grant[9] of Mādhavarāja, (2) the Ganjam plates[10] of Mādhavarāja dated 300 G. E. (619-20 A. D.), (3) the Buguda[11] plates of Mādhavavarman, (4) the Puri plate[12] of Mādhavarman, (5) the Pārikuda plates[13] of Madhyamarāja, (6) the Koṇḍeṇḍā grant[14] of Dharmarāja and (7) the Puri (Uttarapārśva Maṭha) plates[15] of Dharmarāja. Of these the earliest discovered (in 1890 A. D.) was No. 3 (Buguda plates). Then in order comes No. 1 (Khurda plate), wherein we find a genealogy of three generations of kings in the relation of father and son, viz Mādhavarāja, his father Ayaśobhīta and his grand-father Sainyabhīta. The place whence the charter was issued was the royal residence of Koṅgoda. Mādhavarāja, the donor, is described herein as "born in the Śailodbhava family" and "the master of all Kaliṅgas". The village, to which the granted land of Kumbhāracheḍa belonged, is named Āharaṇa situated in the *vishaya* of Thoraṇa. Attention may pointedly be drawn in this connection to the genealogy of three generations of kings mentioned in Record No. 2 (Ganjam plates, discovered in 1900 A. D.),

[9] *J A S B.*, Vol. LXXIII (1904), p. 282 ff.

[10] *Epi. Ind*, Vol. VI, p. 143 ff.

[11] *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 41 ff and Vol. VII, p. 100 ff.

[12] *Sāhitya* (Bengali Monthly Magazine, Calcutta, now defunct), 1319 B.S., p. 889 ff.

[13] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. IX, pp. 281-287.

[14] *Ibi*, Vol. XIX, p. 265 ff.

[15] *J B. & O.R.S.*, Vol. XVI, p. 176 ff.

dated 300 G.E. (=619-20 A.D.), which belongs to the reign of *Mahārāja-mahāsāmanta* Mādhavarāja, who was at that time the feudatory chief ruling in the country of Koṅgoda under the suzerainty of Mahārājādhirāja Śaśāṅka, undoubtedly the great Gauḍādhipa, the powerful adversary of King Harshavardhana and the treacherous murderer of that emperor's elder brother, King Rājyavardhana. This Mahārāja Mādhavarāja calls himself the son of Mahārāja Ayaśobhīta and grand-son of Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta Mādhavarāja. It is difficult to suggest as to whose suzerainty was acknowledged by the donor's grand-father Mādhavarāja, ruling as a feudatory sometime towards the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. Nor is it easy to say if he had any political relation with the rulers of Samataṭa. In all likelihood he had some connection with the Later Gupta emperors of Magadha. Whatever the truth may have been, we find that Mādhavarāja, the donor, the grand-son of the first Mādhavarāja, ruled in Orissa as feudatory under the suzerainty of Śaśāṅka, King of Bengal (Karṇasuvarṇa), who assumed the lofty title of *Guaḍādhipa*, undoubtedly by his gradual occupation of North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana), and also of parts of Magadha and countries still further west. The family, whose greatness Mādhavarāja enhanced by his repulsion of the army of its enemies by the strength of his sword, is called in this epigraph the *Śilodbhava-kula*. This feudatory ruler allowed his wealth to be enjoyed by the distressed, the helpless, the miserable and the mendicant people. He possessed all kingly virtues and was "endowed

with learning, prowess and steadiness which adorned the whole circle of the world". He was devoted to the feet of the Lord (Śiva) and calls himself a *Parama-brahmaṇya* (most well-versed in the Vedic lore). This charter was issued from Koṅgoda (probably from its head-quarters described as) situated near the bank of the river Śālimā, which may be identified with the rivulet Salia in Bānpur. It records the grant of the village Chhavalakkhaya situated in the *vishaya* of Kṛshṇagiri, made according to the principle of permanent endowment (*akshayanīvī*), to a Brāhmaṇa named Chharampasvāmin of the Bharadvāja *gotra* with the *pravaras* of Āṅgirasa and Bārhaspatya, for the increase of merits of the chief's (Mādhavarāja's) parents and himself on the occasion of a solar eclipse. It may be held, specially on the strength of the identity of the script used in both the Khurda and the Ganjam plate inscriptions, that the three generations of kings described in both are identical, though in the former inscription the donor Mādhavarāja's grand-father is named Sainyabhīta, while in the latter he is named Mādhavarāja, which, in all probability, indicates that Mādhavarāja (the grand-father) had a *biruda*, Sainyabhīta. It is clear, we repeat here, that these three Śailodbhava kings bore to each other the relation of father and son in order. This point is very important for a discussion of the chronology of this dynasty.

We have however a larger genealogy of the Śailodbhava kings from Record No. 3 (Buguda plates), discovered in the Gumsur Tāluka of the Ganjam district. It is not dated. The late Dr. Keilhorn, who

calls the characters used therein the Ganjam variety of the Northern alphabet, confesses[16] that it is impossible "to determine with confidence the exact time of these plates from the characters", but his "impression is that they cannot be earlier than about the 10th century A.D., and that probably they are much later". With due deference to the great palaeographist, we feel inclined to disagree with him, and think that the characters belong to a period about two centuries earlier, i.e. the eighth century A.D. Nor can we on any account accept the opinion of our late friend Mr. R. D. Banerji, that[17] the donor kings of the Khurda and the Ganjam inscriptions, as well as of the Buguda plates are identical, and that[18] the characters of the Pārikuda plates are "very closely allied to those of the Khurda and the Ganjam plates". Dr. Sten Konow thought, rightly enough in our opinion, that palaeography is hardly in favour of the early date (694 A.D.) proposed by Mr. Banerji for the Pārikuda plates of Madhyamarāja, on the strength of the uncertain date 88, which he referred to the Harsha era, but which seemed to Messrs. Venkayya and Kṛshṇa Śāstri a sign for the regnal year 26. Apart from palaeographic considerations, the fact that there was the distinct relationship of father and son amongst the three generations of kings mentioned in the Khurda and the Ganjam plates, viz. Mādhavarāja I (=Sainyabhīta I of Ganjam plates), Ayaśobhīta and Mādhavarāja II, stands in the way of late Mr.

16 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. VII, p. 102.

17 *History of Orissa*, Vol. I, pp. 130 131.

18 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XI, p. 281 ff.

Banerji's identifying the three kings of the Buguda and the Pārikuda plates, viz. Sainyabhīta, Ayaśobhīta and Sainyabhīta (*alias* Mādhavavarman=Śrīnivāsa), as in both these grants, as also in some of the other grants of the Śailodbhava kings, the two latter kings are described as being "born in the first king's (Sainyabhīta I's) family", that is to say, that the first two kings Sainyabhīta and Ayaśobhīta are not related to one another as father and son.

The historical material that may be obtained from a study of the Buguda plates may be summed up thus. This inscription records the rent-free grant of a village named Puipīno (more probably, Pūīpino), situated in the Khadirapaṭṭaka of the Guḍḍa *vishaya*, made by King Mādhavavarman (mentioned also as Mādhavendra in verse 2, probably to meet the exigency of metre), to the Bhaṭṭa Vāmana, son of Ādityadeva and grandson of Vāmana, who was a student of the Taittirīya *charaṇa*, of the Hārita *gotra* and with the three-fold *pravaras* Āṅgirasa, Āmbarisha and Yauvanāśva, for the purpose of augmenting the religious merits of his parents and himself on the occasion of a solar eclipse. The charter was issued by the king from his residence at Kaiṅgoda (Koṅgoda of other plates). The donor king appears, from the invocation to the god Śambhu, to be a devotee of Śiva, like the preceding Śailodbhava rulers. Amongst the other glories of the donor king described in this inscription, he is specially given the epithet *Kalimalakshālana* i. e. one who can purge (the world) of the impurities of the Kali age. This evidently refers to the restoration of the *varṇāśramadharma*, which fell into disuse, not

only in this part of Northern India, but also in other parts, on account of the Hūṇa invasion and the influence of the Mahāyāna Buddhism of the fifth and sixth centuries A. D. In the genealogical portion (vv. 3-12) of the inscription we read that there was a famous personage "amongst the people of Kaliṅga" *(Kaliṅga-janatāsu)*, whose name was Pulindasena. This man, although endowed with many personal virtues, e. g. a lofty stature, strong arms and broad chest, did not covet sovereignty for himself *(neshṭaṁ bhuvo maṇḍalaṁ)*, but he rather worshipped Brahman so that the god might be pleased to create a fit ruler for Kaliṅga. The god granted his wish and created, apparently out of pieces of rock *(śilā-śakala)*, the lord Śailodbhava who thus became the founder of a distinguished dynasty *(parikalpita-sad-vaṁśaḥ)*. In the family of Śailodbhava *(Śailodbhavasya kulajaḥ)* was Araṇabhīta who caused tears in the eyes of the wives of his adversaries (of course, by killing them in battle). His son was King Sainyabhīta I, who obtained victory by scaring away innumerable lines of elephants (of his enemies), and thus caused delight to the earth i. e. to.Orissa. In his family again (*tasy-āpi vaṁśe*) King Ayaśobhīta was born. He it was who was successful in removing the impurities of the Kali age by his orthodox actions. Of him was born his son, Sainyabhīta,—the handsome, powerful and pious king, whose sword was "fit to split the forehead of the large elephants (of his enemies)" and before whom his foes faded away "with their majestic glory abridged" *(saṁkshipta-maṇḍala-rucaḥ)* by means of his own stronger glory. This king, who bore two other names

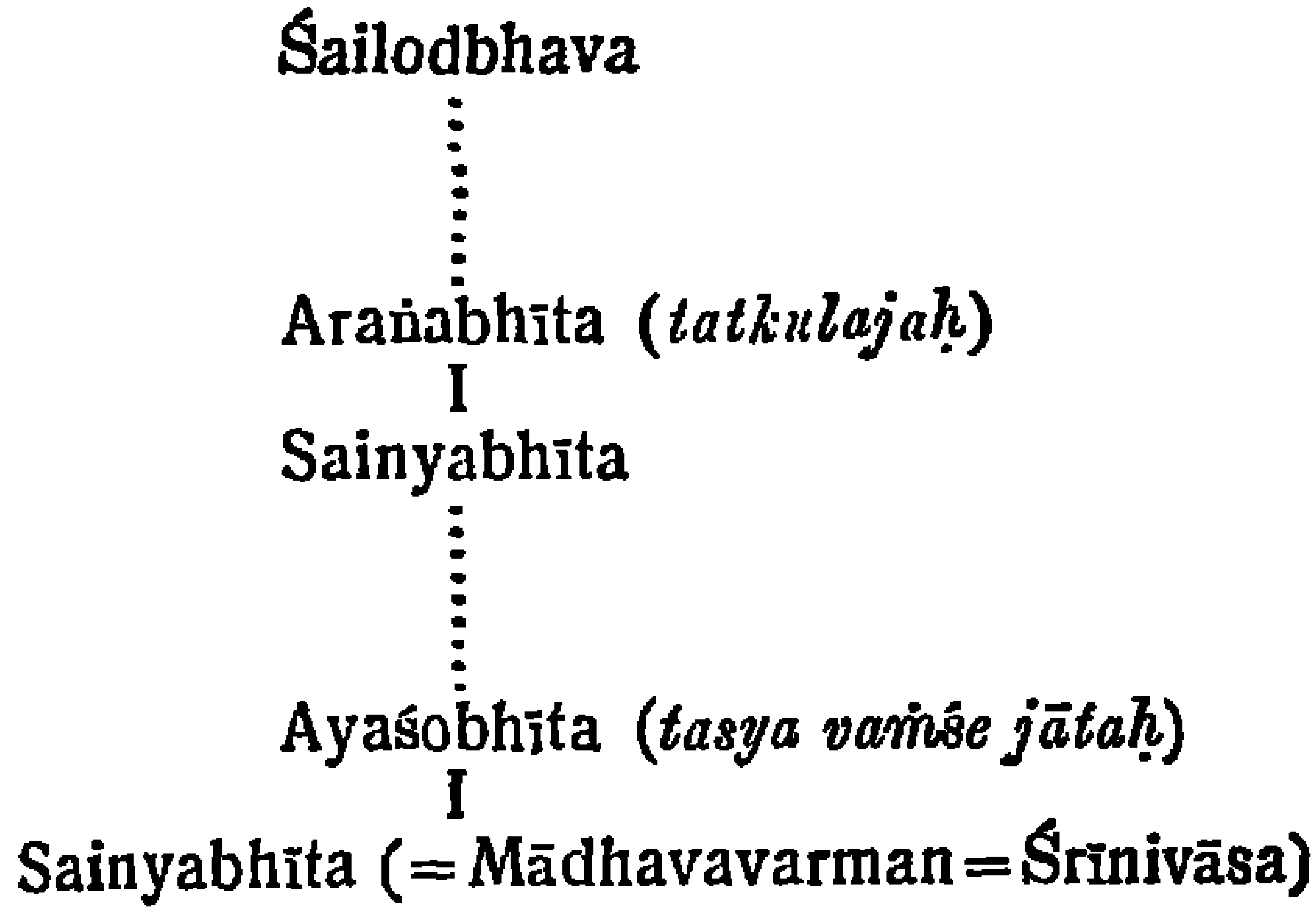
viz. Mādhavavarman and Śrīnivāsa, is also described as heightening the glory of the gods in heaven, by the restoration of the Aśvamedha and other sacrifices, the names of which other impious kings of the Kali age wanted to abolish from the earth, by allowing themselves to perform many a sinful act. The king's favourite State-officer, Gaṅgabhadra (the *Pratihārin*) was the *dūtaka* in this grant.

While dealing with the chronology of the Śailodbhava kings, both the late Mr. R. D. Banerji and Mr. Vināyaka Misra[19] omitted to take notice of another copper-plate inscription[20] of King Mādhavavarman, discovered more than two decades ago, and deciphered and published by the present writer in the (now defunct) Bengali monthly of Calcutta, the *Sāhitya*. It is a single plate, undoubtedly the second one of a series of at least three such plates which contained the whole text of the charter. The other two plates are unfortunately missing. It commences after two letters from the third quarter of the seventh verse in the Buguda plates, and ends with the prose portion which concludes the sentence signifying the gift. A hole in the plate indicates that this and the other missing plates were held together by means of a ring. It is, however, difficult to say whether any seal was soldered onto it. This plate was made over at Puri by Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Sadāśiva Misra to my distinguished friend Mr. (now Rai Bahadur) Ramāprasād Chanda, when the latter with some other members of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi,

19 *Indian Historical Quarterly*, (1931), p. 665 ff.

20 *Sāhitya*, 1319 B. S., p. 889 ff with plates.

went out on their tour of research in the various places of antiquarian interest in Orissa, in the autumn of 1912 A.D. The Mahāmahopadhyāya got it from the late Mr. Padma Chāran Mahanti, formerly superintendent of the Puri Collectorate, an inhabitant of the village of Birobai in the Puri district. The provenance of the plate is not known. It may, however, be called the Puri plate of Mādhavavarman, because we of the above-named Society got it at Puri. The genealogical verses of this inscription (so far obtained) are exactly the same as those in the Buguda plates of the same king. It purports to be a charter addressed from his residence (*niketa*) at Koṅgeda (Koṅgoda) by King Mādhavavarman of the Śailodbhava dynasty to his officials, the Brāhmaṇas, the Karaṇas and others, regarding a rent-free grant of some land, made, for the purpose of increasing the religious merits of his parents and himself, to a Brāhmaṇa named Bhaṭṭa Vittadeva of Kauśika *gotra*, a student of the Chhandoga *charaṇa*, belonging to the Kauthuma *śākhā* with Utathya and other *pravaras*, who immigrated from a village called Śāla (or Māla ?)-grāma situated within the *vishaya* of Thoraṇa. The name of the same *vishaya*, as we have seen above, occurs also in the Khurda plate inscription. The following genealogical table of Śailodbhava rulers may be drawn from the contents of the Buguda and the Puri plate inscriptions :—



Śailodbhava
⋮
Araṅabhīta (*tatkulajaḥ*)
I
Sainyabhīta
⋮
Ayaśobhīta (*tasya vaṁśe jātaḥ*)
I
Sainyabhīta (= Mādhavavarman = Śrīnivāsa)

Records Nos. 5-7 i. e. the Pārikuda plates of Madhyamarāja and the Koṇḍeṇḍā and the Puri (Uttarapārśva Maṭha) plates of Dharmarāja carry the above genealogy down to two more generations of kings, namely to Madhyamarāja (alias Ayaśobhīta ?), son of Sainyabhīta, the last king in the above table, and then to Mādhyamarāja's son Dharmarāja. The only additional knowledge of history that we have from the Pārikuda plates is that King Madhyamarāja was a capable and powerful member of the Śailodbhava dynasty, that his kingdom contained many hermits and that he himself was an ardent devotee of Śiva (a *parama-māheśvara*). This king made a grant of a village in the *vishaya* of Kaṭakabhukti situated in the Koṅgada-maṇḍala to twelve Brāhmaṇas. He is also described as having enhanced his own fame by the performance of the Vājapeya and the Aśvamedha sacrifices. We have referred above to our inability to accept the late Mr. Banerji's reading of the numerical figures in this grant and his view of the date of the grant.

The genealogical verses of the Puri plates of Dharmarāja are exactly similar to those of the Pārikuda plates of his father Madhyamarāja, upto the description of the latter king. King Dharmarāja, the donor, issues this charter from Mātṛchandrapāṭaka, and it records the grant by this king of a field in the village of Doṅgi, in the *vishaya* of Varttani in the Koṅgoda-maṇḍala, made to a Brāhmaṇa named Golasvāmin, alias Māsika, of the Kaṇva *śākhā* and of the Vājasaneya *charaṇa*, belonging to the *gotra* of Jātukarṇa and having the *pravaras*, Vaśishṭha, Ātreya and Jātukarṇa. Mahāsāmanta Goshāladeva was the *dūtaka* in this grant and the writer of it was the Mahābhogin, Sāmanta Paṭapāla. It is a dated inscription, the date of which was read by Mr. Rājaguru as *saṁvat* 512 *Vaiśākha sudi*. The late Mr. R. D. Banerji[21], however, contested the reading and thought, perhaps rightly, that it must be read either as *saṁvat* 812 (=756 A.D.) or simply 12 indicating only the regnal year of this ruler.

The second copper-plate charter[22] of Dharmarāja, alias Mānabhīta, which was issued from the royal residence at Somapura, records the rent-free grant of half the village Koṇḍeṇḍā in Khiḍiṅgāhāra *vishaya*, made to an *agnihotṛn* Brāhmaṇa named Bhaṭṭa Goṇadeva-svāmin, belonging to the Kauśika *gotra* and the Vājasaneya *charaṇa*. It is an inscription dated 800 *saṁvat* (=743-44 A.D.). The genealogical portion is common to both this grant and the Puri

[21] *Op. Cit.*, pp. 133-134.
[22] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 265-70.

plates of Dharmarāja. There is a description of a most important historical information common to both these grants, viz. the battle of Phāsika, which provides us with a definite clue to the solution of the chronology of the Śailodbhava kings. The incident is thus described in both (cf. v. 16). After Dharmarāja had ascended the throne by right of primogeniture, a person named Mādhava, probably Dharmarāja's younger brother, raised an insurrection, but in his attempt to wrest the throne from Dharmarāja he was defeated in battle at a place called Phāsika. Mādhava was then banished from the kingdom, but he made one Tivaradeva his ally, and with the latter's aid again fought against Dharmarāja with the result that the allies sustained a defeat at the hands of the king of Koṅgoda-maṇḍala. Since then Mādhava is reported to have passed his days at the foot of the Vindhyas.

Regarding the identification of this Tivaradeva, ally of Mādhava, there can hardly be any doubt that he must have been the king of the same name belonging to the Somavaṁśī dynasty of Śrīpur or Sirpur in southern Kosala. Tivaradeva was the same as Mahāśivagupta Tivaradeva, who was the elder brother of Chandragupta and uncle of Harshagupta of that family of rulers. He was succeeded in the kingship by his younger brother Chandragupta, who was an opponent of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Govinda III,[23] and was defeated by the latter. From the known dates of Govinda III it may be concluded with some degree

[23] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 240 and 245 (Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha, son of Govinda III) and *ibid*, Vol. XIII, p. 253.

of certainty, that Dharmarāja of Orissa flourished during the second and third quarters of the eighth century A. D., and had probably a long reign.

Lastly we come across the names of two or three more generations of Śailodbhava kings, in a single plate of a grant made by King Madhyamarāja. These names are Dharmarāja's son, Madhyamarāja and the latter's son Raṇakshobha. The name of the younger brother of this Raṇakshobha was prince Peṭavyālloparāja (Paṭṭvyalopa), who had a son named Madhyamarāja (also called Taillapa). But according to Mr. Vināyaka Misra, Taillapa was not identical with Madhyamarāja, but was the latter's father.

The genealogical evidence supplied by the dated and undated epigraphic records of the Śailodbhava dynasty discussed above thus appears in connection with three different groups of rulers, who are put together and arranged below according to our idea of their chronological sequence. The first group of three kings, comprising Sainyabhīta I (=Mādhavarāja I), his son Ayaśobhīta (I) and his son Mādhavarāja II (=Sainyabhīta II ?), is obtained from the Khurda and Ganjam plate inscriptions. The second group of four kings, viz. Araṇabhīta, his son Sainyabhīta I and a descendant in the latter's family named Ayaśobhīta II and his son Sainyabhīta III (=Mādhava-varman=Śrīnivāsa), is found mentioned in the Buguda and Puri plate inscriptions of Mādhavavarman. The third group again of two more kings, viz. Madhyamarāja (=Ayaśobhīta III ?) and his son Dharmarāja (=Mānabhīta), can be had from a study

of the Pārikuda, the Puri (Uttarapārśva-Maṭha) and the Koṇḍeṇḍā plates. In our opinion the whole genealogical table should be drawn up in the following chronological order :—

Pulindasena
⋮
Śailodbhava
⋮
1. Araṇabhīta
I
2. Sainyabhīta I (=Mādhavarāja I)
I
3. Ayaśobhīta I
I
4. Sainyabhīta II (=Mādhavarāja II, 619-20 A.D.)
I
5. Ayaśobhīta II
I
6. Sainyabhīta III (=Mādhavavarman=Śrīnivāsa)
I
7. Ayaśobhīta III (=Madhyamarāja I)
I
8. Mānabhīta (=Dharmarāja, 743-44 A. D. and 756 A.D.)
I
9. Madhyamarāja (II ?)

It appears that the Śailodbhava kings of Orissa had their names ending in *bhīta* and their *birudas* ending in *rāja*. Nos. 2-4 in the above table belong to the first group, Nos. 1-2 and Nos. 5-6 to the second, and Nos. 1-2, Nos. 5-6 and Nos. 7-8 to the third. So the kings of the Śailodbhava dynasty headed by Araṇabhīta ruled in Orissa for more than two centuries, beginning roughly from the sixth and ending about the middle of the eighth century A. D., or probably a little later.

CHAPTER IX

The Kingdom of Eastern Bengal (Vaṅga-Samataṭa).

It does not seem to be an historical fact, as shown elsewhere by the present writer, that towards the close of the 5th century A.D. only the northern and central portions of India were held by different branches of the imperial Gupta family and in other parts of the empire powers, previously subject or feudatory to the Guptas,[1] became independent. Only one branch of the main line, represented by Puragupta and his descendants, wielded some sort of authority in some part of Magadha, including parts of Aṅga, and all the other feudatories continued to remain subject to the imperial Gupta supremacy. Eastern Bengal (i.e. Vaṅga-Samataṭa) was a feudatory kingdom under the imperial Gupta rule.

Of the different parts of modern Bengal, the one which consists of what should have properly been called South Bengal, but which was not thought of as a separate geographical division, formed part of the old province named Vaṅga, and the one which is now called Eastern Bengal formed part of the old province named Samataṭa. But in later days, probably during the 7th century A.D., when the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang visited India (629-48 A.D.), the name Samataṭa represented both these countries, i.e. Vaṅga and itself. The name Vaṅga, however, is a very old one. In Vedic and Buddhist literature, Kauṭilya's

Arthaśāstra, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* and also some of the works of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, we come across the names of the eastern country, called Vaṅga and its rulers.

The first historical reference to the people of Vaṅga is found in the Meharauli Iron Pillar inscription[1] of king Chandra, whom we have elsewhere tried to identify with Chandragupta I of the imperial Gupta dynasty, and not with Chandravarman of Pushkaran, contemporary of Samudragupta. Since the conquest of those people by King Chandra, Vaṅga must have acknowledged the suzerainty of the Guptas.

But Samataṭa (as a separate kingdom, a *pratyanta* country in the east), like the other eastern kingdoms, viz. Ḍavāka, Kāmarūpa, Nepāla etc. paid tribute to the conquering Gupta monarch Samudragupta,[2] to whom they were all bound to pay allegiance. The kings of East Bengal continued to remain in this relation with the imperial house, till the end of its rule in the first part of the 6th century A.D., in consequence of the raid of the Hūṇas and the unexpected rise of the ambitious Yaśodharman of Mālwā. The discovery of gold coins of Chandragupta II and Skandagupta, and also silver coins with the peacock symbol in or near Koṭālipāḍā in the Faridpur district is an evidence in point, for supporting the theory that the Eastern Bengal kingdom remained under the paramount power of the early Guptas. During

1 Fleet *C.I.I.* Vol. III, No. 32 and *Indian Antiquary*, 1919 pp. 98-101.

2 Fleet *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 1.

probably the last portion of the reign of Budhagupta or the first of that of his successor Bhānugupta, we have now epigraphic evidence of the existence of a king in Eastern Bengal, named Vainyagupta, who was very probably a feudatory of the imperial monarch of the Gupta dynasty ruling in the Gupta year 188 i.e. 507-8 A.D. The recently discovered Gunaighar (Tippera) copper-plate grant of this king edited[3] by my friend and pupil, Professor Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharyya M. A. of the Chittagong College, supplies us with this important historical information. This copper-plate, to which is soldered on the left side an almost oval-shaped seal with the emblem of a figure of a bull recumbent to the proper right, with the legend "*Mahārāja-Śrī-Vainyaguptaḥ,*" contains an inscription incised in letters of the Eastern variety of the Northern Gupta script, which have clear affinity to the script of the Faridpur plates ; and it may be regarded as the earliest copper-plate record hitherto known to have been discovered in East Bengal. Professor Bhattacharyya has proved beyond doubt by means of palaeographic, linguistic and other kinds of evidence that Vainyagupta's plate was found in some locality (in the district of Tippera) in or near which were situated the headquarters of the kingdom of this king. We shall observe later that another plate[4] of the 7th century A. D. was discovered in the Tippera district, the contents of which also led us to believe that the Eastern Bengal kingdom

3 *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1930, pp. 45-60.

4 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XV, pp. 301-315.

had its headquarters in or near about Dacca-Tippera districts. It may be pointed out in this connection, that the seals of some of the later copper-plate grants belonging to the time of the other provincial kings viz. Śaśāṅka of Karṇasuvarṇa and the Maukhari ruler Śarvvavarman, as well as the seal (Inscription No. 1) of the Nepal King Aṁśuvarman (contemporary of Harshavardhana) dated 39 H. E. (=645 A. D.), contain the same kind of bull-emblem indicating that almost all the kings of the North Eastern Indian provinces were devotees of Mahādeva.

From the use of the mere title of *Mahārāja* by this Eastern Bengal king of the early sixth century, a title which during the Gupta period was used only by the *Sāmantas* and sometimes also by some of the States-officers, it seems probable that Mahārāja Vaiṇyagupta was a vassal king under the imperial Gupta family, not yet in the enjoyment of an independent rank, strictly so called, as thought by Professor Bhattacharyya. He is found to have issued his charter in 507-8 A.D. (506 A. D., according to Prof. Bhattacharyya, as the Gupta era was then current, *varttamāna*) from his victorious *skandhāvāra* (either touring camp or capital), situated in a place called Kripura in Eastern Bengal. As has been hinted above, Vaiṇyagupta at this date was reigning about four years before the earliest known date (191 G. E.) of King Bhānugupta i.e. 510-11 A.D., and about a quarter of a century before the rise of Yaśodharman whose dominions included the valley of the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra river. In our view King Dharmāditya of the Faridpur plates was the first Eastern Bengal king who declared

independence by assumption of the imperial title of *Mahārājādhirāja* and this happened when the rule of the imperial Gupta kings became extinct and the Later Guptas, whose sovereign control existed also in Central and North Bengal, began to reign in Magadha. Although the surname Gupta, of this Eastern Bengal ruler may suggest some relation with the imperial Guptas, this cannot, however, be definitely established. Professor Bhattacharyya, moreover, points out that the imperial Guptas were Vishṇavas by religion, whereas this Vaiṇyagupta was a Śaiva. However, we find that this king was a ruler of considerable political importance as he had a number of high State-officers under him. This inscription mentions that on the request of *Mahārāja* Rudradatta, who is described as the king's *pādadāsa* i.e. his own dependent officer of the State (and not a vassal, as wrongly supposed by Prof. Bhattacharyya), the king sanctioned the grant, as an *agrahārā* gift of 11 *pāṭakas* of *khila* (fallow) land in five plots, as also some *talabhūmi* (home-stead lands) for meeting all kinds of expenses of such objects connected with worship, as perfumes, flower, lamps, incense etc. for the Buddha in the manastery (*vihāra*) of Avalokiteśvara which was being erected by that State-officer in honour of the great teacher (*āchāryya*) Śāntideva, the founder of the Vaivarttika congregation of monks belonging to the *Mahāyana* school, and for the provision of food and raiment, beds, seats, and medicines etc. to the members of that congregation and also for the cost of future repair-work in the portion which will be broken and torn in that monastery. The *dūtaka* in this

grant was the great (probably, the highest) State-officer *Mahārāja-mahāsāmanta* Vijayasena, who had the right of exercise of the functions of four high officials, viz. the *Mahāpratīhāra* (the chief officer of the Palace Police), the *Mahāpilupati* (the Superintendent of the royal stable for elephants), the *Pañchādhikaraṇoparika* (the head or presiding officer of the five royal courts or departments) and the *Pāṭyuparika* (?) —*purapāloparika* (the head of the city governors and *pāṭis* [?]). Probably Vijayasena was in charge of the portfolios of all these departments and was thus the chief officer of State during the reign of Vaiṇyagupta. Three other officers bearing the title *Kumārāmātya*, whose position was surely inferior to Vijayasena's own, are also named in this epigraph viz. Revajyasvamin, Bhāmaha and Vatsabhogika ; and they were informed of the royal order of the grant, by Vijayasena. One cannot be quite sure whether they were the *vishayapatis* of some districts (*vishaya*) under this king. *Karaṇakāyastha* Naradatta, who was the *Sāndhivigrahā*[*dhikā*]*rin*, the Minister of Peace and War, was the writer of this document. That Eastern Bengal has always been a country of water-courses, channels, river-beds, rivulets and alluvial *char* lands can be corroborated by reference to such an inscription of the sixth century A.D., wherein reference is made to such Bengali (non-Sanskritic) words as *khāḍi* (channel), *jolā* (a water-course), *nauyoga* (probably a haven for boats), *hojjika* (water-logged place) and *vilāla* (a large sheet of watery hollow).

The most interesting information of historical importance is that Vaiṇyagupta, describing himself as

Bhagavan=Mahādeva-pādānuddhyāta i.e., contemplating the feet of Lord Mahādeva, thinks that the religious merit of his parents and himself will be enhanced, if he makes such a grant of land to a Buddhist *vihāra*. Professor Bhattacharyya has rightly pointed out that the name of the Vaivarttika *saṅgha* of the Mahāyāna school is known in this record for the first time, and it was established by the Mahāyānist Bauddhācharyya Śāntideva. It is indeed very interesting, as Professor Bhattacharyya says, that even a Brāhmanic king allowed Mahāyāna Buddhism to flourish under his broad patronage, even so early as one century before the time of Yuan Chwang (629-45 A. D.). Eastern Bengal seems to have been a great stronghold of that school of Buddhism.

From the contents of the Paharpur copper-plate[5] of Budhagupta's time (159 G.E.=478-79 A.D.) it can be pointed out that 8 *droṇavāpas* of land make one *kulyavāpa* and therefore the old lexicographers are quite right in stating such a formula. This new Eastern Bengal inscription makes it clear by its contents that one *pāṭaka* of land consists of 40 *droṇas*. Hence the relation between a *kulyavāpa* and a *pāṭaka* is in the ratio of 1 to 5. This is importpnt for the clear understanding of land-measurement as referred to in old epigraphic documents discovered in East Bengal.

That the old kings of East Bengal used to establish Buddhist monasteries is evident from the mention of *Rājavihāras* in connection with the boundaries of the granted land. Another *vihāra* under the supervision

[5] *Epi. Ind.* Vol, XX, pp. 59 ff.

of a teacher of the Buddhist monks, named Jitasena, is mentioned in Vaiṇyagupta's charter.

We are quite in the dark about the successor of any other feudatory ruler in East Bengal (Samataṭa), acknowledging the suzerainty of any of the last imperial Guptas, or of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. But the three famous copper-plate grants of the Faridpur district, marked A, B, and C by Mr. Pargiter[6] and a fourth one marked D by the present writer,[7] and the discovery of a few of their coins, disclosed the fact that three independent kings bearing the imperial title of *Mahārājādhirāja*, named Dharmāditya, Gopachandra and Samāchāradeva, ruled in Eastern Bengal, and were probably " related to one another and formed a dynasty that took the place of the Guptas in Eastern India ", as Mr. N. K. Bhattasali[8] thinks. It is difficult to agree with Mr. Bhattasali that they were *sovereigns* reigning in the whole of Eastern India but it seems quite probable that they were rulers in Samataṭa only, with full and independent power exercising jurisdiction over its different parts through the agency of governors, e.g. in the Vārakamaṇḍala, and also having feudatory chiefs under their suzerainty. Some may suggest that these three imperial kings assumed independence in Eastern India, after the break-up of the imperial Gupta dominion towards the middle of the 6th century A.D., and ruled the different parts of Bengal, including

[6] *I. A.*, 1910.

[7] Sir Ashutosh Mookherjee *Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume* III, p. 485 and *J. A. S. B.* (Pargiter) 1911.

[8] *Epi. Ind*, Vol. XVIII, No. 11, p. 84.

even Puṇḍravardhana and Karṇasuvarṇa by a system of administration through the agency of governors, and district officers working under them, as scholars have known from the Damodarpur copper plates of the Gupta period edited by the present writer. To us, however, it appears that these three kings ruled from the place, wherefrom Vaiṇyagupta also had done, a few years before them. This locality was somewhere either in eastern Dacca or northern Tippera district, which formed the central part of the kingdom of these monarchs ; and the Vārakamaṇḍala (which roughly comprised the modern Faridpur and Jessore districts) formed an additional part of their kingdom, ruled through their administrative agents, namely Governors and *Vishayapatis*. It may also be thought that after the downfall of the imperial Gupta dynasty, Central Bengal (i.e. the portion known a little later by the name of Karṇasuvarṇa) and North Bengal (the old *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana) were annexed to the kingdom of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha, and remained in that relation, till Harshavardhan's subjugation of almost the whole of Bengal, and the establishment of his supremacy in the eastern region, before the first quarter of the seventh century A.D. These three Eastern Bengal rulers may, therefore, be taken as reigning, very probably in succession, during the last three quarters of the 6th century A.D., when the three or four Later Gupta rulers just before Mādhavagupta, Harshavardhan's ally, ruled from Magadha. No great stress should be laid on the view[9] of Dr. Hoernle that Dharmāditya

[9] *Vide I. A.*, 1910, p. 208.

is to be identified with Yaśodharman and Gopachandra with Prince Govi(pi ?)chandra cited by Tāranātha in his Tibetan History of Buddhism in India, who, in the opinion of the Doctor, was, according to a tradition, "a grandson of Bālāditya and was son of the last Gupta Emperor Kumāragupta II (now, Kumāragupta III, in our opinion) whom Yaśodharman displaced". But this is certain that we cannot establish any connection, if there had been any, between these Eastern Bengal kings and the imperial Gupta dynasty. Nor have we been quite convinced by Mr. Bhattasali's arguments,[10] based on the sameness of the bull-standard on the coin of both Samāchāradeva and Śaśāṅka, King of Karṇasuvarṇa, that it is "almost certain that Samāchāradeva was a predecessor of Śaśāṅka in the kingdom of Gauḍa and of the same lineage, perhaps his father". All that seems probable to us is that Samāchāradeva and Śaśāṅka may have been contemporary rulers for sometime, in two different parts of Bengal, viz. Samataṭa and Karṇasuvarṇa respectively.

We will now collect materials for the history of Eastern Bengal, so far as that can be done from a study of the four Faridpur copper-plate grants. Two of those documents (A and B) belong to the reign of *Mahārājādhirāja-Paramabhaṭṭāraka* Dharmāditya. The first document was issued in the third regnal year of the monarch and the second was not dated. It has been fully shown by the author elsewhere, how these Faridpur charters were documents of the same type

10 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 81.

and form as the Damodarpur, the Dhanaidaha and the Paharpur inscriptions (including the newly discovered Baigram plate of Kumāragupta I's reign), i.e. they were not ordinary royal grants of land, but were land-sale documents, the procedure of purchase, appearing to be almost the same in all of them. In both these inscriptions (A and B) we find that the *vishaya* (district) of Vārakamaṇḍala was administered by *vishayapatis*, named Jajāva in the first charter, and Gopālasvāmin in the second. These two officers, like the other *vishayapatis* in the North Bengal inscriptions of the previous and the same centuries, were appointed to their offices by still higher authorities, governors or viceroys, who were themselves favoured by the emperors, and who wielded administrative authority over an area larger than the *vishayas*. In the second record it is mentioned that Nāgadeva, who had the right of use of the two titles, *mahāpratihāra* and *uparika*, was in charge of the larger territorial division (probably of the same class as a *bhukti*) named Navyāvakāśikā, which, however, was taken by Mr. Pargiter and Mr. Bhattasali as "the provincial capital" or "the Divisional head quarters". The local administrative court was called *vishayādhikaraṇa*, wherein the chief secretary was recognised by the title of *prathamakāyastha*. Mr. N. K. Bhattasali's conjecture that the ruins of Sabhar in the district of Dacca may be identified with Navyāvakāśikā may not find favour with scholars. But the Vārakamaṇḍala-*vishaya* must have been the district round about Koṭalipāḍā in the present district of Faridpur, and it may have

comprised alluvial lands[11] and islands or *chars* of the Ganges delta. The name of a *sādhanika* (probably a military officer) in the service of the *vishaya* of Vārakamaṇḍala is named Vātabhoga in plate A. The name of the Governor in Plate A is Sthāṇudatta who enjoyed the right of use of the title *mahārāja*. He was not, however, a king as supposed by Pargiter, and although the name of the territory which he administered is not mentioned (probably through oversight), it seems that that name must have been Navyāvakāśikā. The opinion that this division was not in existence in the third year of Dharmāditya's reign is not very convincing. What territorial division, in that case, was *mahārāja* Sthāṇudatta in charge of ? The Chief Secretary under Gopālasvāmin in the latter part of Dharmāditya's reign is mentioned as Nayasena.

That, after King Dharmāditya, *mahārājādhirāja* Bhaṭṭāraka Gopachandra reigned admits of no doubt, as we find in Plate C, issued in the 18th year (not the 19th year as read by Mr. Pargiter) of his reign, that the same *Mahāpratihāra*, *Kumārāmātya*, *Uparika* Nāgadeva was the Governor of Navyāvakāśikā, and the Chief Secretary (*jyeshṭha kāyastha*) of the *vishayādhikaraṇa* was the same Nayasena. The name of the *vishayapati* of Vārakamaṇḍala at the time of this grant is named Vatsapālasvāmin (probably a Brāhmaṇa). The name Nayasena, as the Chief-*kāyastha* both in Dharmāditya's and Gopachandra's

[11] *Vide* the most important and interesting remark on the topography of the localities by Pargiter (in *I. A.* 1910, pp. 209-10).

plates (B and C), reminds us of the chief State-officer with several high titles named Mahārāja-mahāsāmanta Vijayasena in the service of King Vaiṇyagupta in 507-8 A. D. Both have the same surname *sena* and probably the family they came from supplied hereditary chief State-officers to the imperial monarchs in East Bengal. This remark is intended only to connect Vaiṇyagupta and Gopachandra as rulers of the same kingdom of East Bengal. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[12] mentions a king of the *prāchya-janapadas*, named Gopa (*Gopākhya nṛpati*). Probably that king is to be identified with Gopachandra.

The next king, who reigned in Samataṭa after Gopachandra, was *Mahārājādhirāja* Samāchāradeva, in whose 14th regnal year one record (Plate D) was issued from the *vishayādhikaraṇa* of Vārakamaṇḍala, which was administered by *vishayapati* Pavittraka. *Antaraṅga* (member of the inner council) *Uparika* Jīvadatta was in charge of the province of Navyāva-kāśikā, which he obtained for administration through favour of the imperial monarch Samāchāradeva. It appears that Suvarṇavīthī was the name of the head-quarters of the large territorial division of Navyāvakāśikā, The chief official (secretary, *adhikaraṇika*) of the district administration of Vārakamaṇḍala was a person named Dāmuka. We know of only two gold coins,[13] one of the *Rājalīlā* type discovered in Jessore district and the second of

12 Chapter 53, p. 637.

13 Explained fully by Mr. N. K. Bhattasali in *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XVIII pp. 79-80.

the common *Archer* type of Gupta coins (provenance unknown), belonging to the reign of Samāchāradeva, the reverse legend being recognised as *Narendravinata*. The bull-standard of these coins indicates that King Samāchāradeva was a devotee of Śiva. We know as yet nothing regarding any successor of Samāchāradeva in the East Bengal kingdom.

It is difficult to establish any connecting link between the kings of the Faridpur plates and those of the Khadga dynasty, mentioned in the Ashrafpur[14] grants and the Deulbari bronze image inscription.[15] The latter were local kings of Samataṭa acknowledging in all probability, the lord-paramountcy of the last imperial rulers of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. There remains little doubt that Samataṭa also yielded to the arms of Harshavardhana, and acknowledged his authority with the rest of Bengal. Hence probably we have no knowledge of any imperial successor to the throne of Samāchāradeva in East Bengal. In our opinion the Khadga dynasty of four rulers reigned during the last three quarters of the 7th century A. D., and must not have lived long beyond the first quarter of the 8th century; and they ruled in East Bengal contemporaneously with the last three or four rulers of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha, ruling from about 650 to 730 A.D.

Between Harsha's death, which broke up his vast empire in Northern India and the beginning of the rule in East Bengal of the Khadga dynasty, however, we

[14] *Mem. A. S. B.*, Vol. I, pp. 85-91.

[15] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 357 ff.

shall have to place the history of another line of feudatory chiefs with the surname *nātha*, who must have been subject to the lord-paramountcy, either of the East Bengal rulers of the Faridpur grants or that of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha. It is the copperplate grant[16] of Lokanātha, a feudatory chief (a *sāmanta* with the *kumārāmātya* title) which has disclosed the name of a hitherto unknown dynasty ruling in some part of East Bengal, owing allegiance to some imperial ruler. This plate was discovered somewhere in the district of Tippera, more than a quarter of a century ago, and was deciphered and edited by the present writer for the first time. The seal attached to this plate bears on the obverse a figure of the goddess Lakshmī or Śrī in relief, standing on a lotus with two elephants on her two sides sprinkling her with water from two jars lifted by their trunks, the reverse bearing a full-blown lotus. This plate has affinity with the three Faridpur plates (A, B and C), in this way that the latter also had seals containing the same emblem. Like the Gunaighar inscription of Vaiṇyagupta of the early sixth century, this plate was discovered in the Tippera district. Lokanātha's seal had two legends on it, one in relief viz, *kumārāmātyādhikaraṇasya*, written in characters of the early Gupta age, and the second, viz, *Lokanāthasya* in characters similar to those used in the writing of the whole of this inscription (in Sanskrit prose and verse of 57 lines) belonging to the Northern class of alphabets of the 7th century A.D. The inscription

[16] *Vide* the writer's edition of it in *Epi. Ind*, Vol. XV, No 19, pp. 301-315.

seems to have been dated in the year 44 which, as we ventured to suggest on palaeographic ground, may have belonged to the Harsha era, corresponding, therefore, to 650 A.D. i.e. three or four years after the death of Harshavardhana. Professor D. R. Bhandarkar[17] has pointed out, from the use of the letter '*dhika*' before the letters signifying 44, that the date of this plate "was at least 144 and not 44" as supplied by the present writer and he has, therefore, thought it to be equivalent to 750 A.D., of course by referring it to be Harsha era. But it could as well be argued that the date is 344 *saṁvat*, and the reference should in that case be to the Gupta era, as in Vaiṇyagupta's Tippera plate, and therefore it is equivalent to 663-64 A.D. We are not in favour of regarding the inscription as belonging to the middle of the 8th century A.D. ; and probably palaeography accords with our view, that the plate should be referred to the middle of the seventh century A.D. The name of the place from which the charter was issued is unfortunately broken away and lost. The learned editor of the *Epigraphia Indica* remarked in a foot-note (p.303 of the writer's article) that "from the opening words it would seem rather as if the documents were issued from the office of the Kumārāmātya of Lokanātha's overlord and only countersigned by Lokanātha himself." But we maintain that during the Gupta age, the title *Kumārāmātya* used by officers of State was found to have been applied also to feudatory (*sāmanta*) chiefs, just as the word *Sāmanta* generally used by feudatory chiefs was also

[17] *I. A.*, Vol. LXI, 1932, p. 44.

sometimes used with other titles by officers of State. So the word *Kumārāmātya* in the opening prose portions of this inscription refers to the feudatory chief Lokanātha himself. In this inscription we have a short history of four or five generations of *Sāmantas* of the Nātha family. They were Śaiva in religion. On account of corrosion and decay the first king's name ending in *nātha* is lost in the copper-plate but he is described as having sprung from the good family of the sage Bharadvāja and he was a renowned king, having right to the use of the paramount title of *adhimahārāja* (or [illegible]). It cannot be definitely stated when this king in this locality of East Bengal made an effort to assume independent imperial authority. He may have adopted a defiant attitude towards any of the sovereigns named in the Faridpur plates. However, as it is not safe to hazard a conjecture in this way, we should only cull what information we can from this grant, about the next three or four generations of kings, whose position was not as high as the first ruler of the line. The second feudatory of this dynasty whose name was Śrīnātha is stated to have acquired much fame as a hero on the field of battle. This king "repelled all misfortunes of the State through the delegates in possession of his own supremacy and displayed all attainable feats on earth." The name of his accomplished and virtuous son was Bhavanātha who, being of a religious turn of mind, and having "the one thought as to how to cross the waters of the ocean of existence," forsook royalty in favour of his brother's accomplished son, whose name, however,

is not found mentioned. The next king (*nṛpa*), the donor of the grant is named Lokanātha. The text admits of some doubt whether he was begotten by Bhavanātha or his brother's son. From the fact of Bhavanātha's placing his brother's son in charge of the administration and passing his days like a *ṛshi*, we took him to have had no issue and construed the text so as to make Lokanātha a son of Bhavanātha's brother's son and not of Bhavanātha himself. Lokanātha, described as a *karaṇa* by caste was born of his mother named Gotradevī who was the daughter of Keśava mentioned as a *pāraśava* by caste and in charge of the army of the king (probably, Lokanātha's father). The great-grand-father and grand-father of his mother are called *dvijavara* and *dvijasattama*, respectively. But Keśava, the father of Lokanātha's mother, is described as a *pāraśava*. The prevelence of the *anuloma* form of marriage in Hindu society of the seveth century is also evident from the fact that Bāṇabhaṭṭa's orthodox father, Chitrabhānu of the orthodox Brāhmaṇa caste married a Śūdra wife and had two sons, *pāraśava* by caste. We find here that the feudal king Lokanātha, a *pāraśava's* grandson on the mother's side, was a *karaṇa*. It is, however, plain that the social status of a *pāraśava* in the seventh century was not at all low, otherwise Keśava could not exercise the function of an army officer and esteemed by the good, nor, could his daughter be married to a feudatory chief's father. Regarding his achievements, it is described that Lokanātha was a very able king, "whose soldiers depended for victory chiefly on their own swords and on the intellect of his

ministers". He was also in possession of a fine cavalry. There is also a reference (in v. 7) in this inscription to the fact, that a large number of soldiers belonging to the paramount sovereign (*parameśvara*) met with annihilation in a battle (?) fought on his behalf." Another battle, in which one Jayatuṅgavarsha seems to have been a party, is also referred to here (in v. 8). It is not clear what part Lokanātha took in it. Another significant fact is mentioned in a verse (v. 9), that a king named Jīvadhāraṇa took military action against Lokanātha, but he gave up hostilities on the advice of his ministers, because Lokanātha had obtained a royal charter (*Śrīpaṭṭa*) from the imperial king, and he gave away to Lokanātha his own territories (*vishaya*) along with his army (*sādhana*). The court-poet says that king Jīvadhāraṇa decided upon this course by reflecting thus on the accomplishments of Lokanātha:—"In the obstinate battle with Jayatuṅgavarsha he (Lokanāth) showed his readiness ; he is expert in the matter of prescribing the right course to seekers (of instruction) in policy ; his subjects are always pleased and he is happy in making alliance : this man of many qualities, dear to the learned, a resort to good people, and prone to (doing) universal good, of sharp intellect, has achieved majesty and prosperity."

The battles referred to above raise several issues to be settled. Who was the lord-paramount, *parameśvara* ? What do we know about Jayatuṅgavarsha and King Jīvadhāraṇa ? We have stated above that this Tippera inscription must be referred to the middle of the seventh century A. D. and there-

fore Lokanātha was probably a feudatory chief only a few years after Harshavardhana's death. This may have been just after the usurper Arjuna or Aruṇāśva's defeat by the Chinese envoy with the help of the Tibetan, Nepal, and Kāmarūpa armies, and when Ādityasena of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha asserted indepence by assumption of the paramount title *mahārājādhirāja*. It must be supposed, from Lokanātha's description as a king with the titles of *nṛpa* and *kumārāmātya* that he was a feudatory chief in East Bengal under Adityasena of Magadha. If it be ever found that there was no continuation of the rule in East Bengal of the imperial monarchs represented in the Faridpur plates during Harsha's reign or after his death, then it is not unlikely that Lokanāth owed his allegiance to Ādityasena, and the *parameśvara* (paramount sovereign) who is described in the inscription (v. 7) as having lost a large number of soldiers in a battle, was Lokanātha's own liege-lord, who must have despached an army to help his feudatory when the latter had to fight against another *nṛpa*, named Jīvadhāraṇa. This last king later made over to Lokanātha his own province and army, giving up hostilities. So it seems that Jīvadhāraṇa seized and occupied Lokanātha's land. Like Lokanātha himself, this Jīvadhāraṇa was also probably a local chief in some part of Eastern India, enjoying a somewhat independent position and he was forced to relinguish war against the other *sāmanta*, perhaps because the latter obtained the royal charter from his suzerain. We should guard against identifying *nṛpa* Jīvadhāraṇa with the *parameśvara*

of the inscription and should not think that it was this Jīvadhāraṇa's army that met with destruction in conflict with Lokanātha. As regards the identity of Jayatuṅgavarsha, we know that the Rāshṭrakuṭa kings of the mediaeval ages used various *birudas*, e.g. *avaloka*, *tuṅga*, *varsha*, and *vallabha*. The late Dr. Fleet is of opinion that, as a result of inter-marriage, other families also adopted these *birudas*. So it is very difficult to identify this Jayatuṅgavarsha, a contemporary of Lokanātha, and we shall have to await future discoveries for the final settlement of these questions.

Mahāsāmanta Pradoshaśarman, an orthodox Brahmaṇa by caste, seems to have been a high officer of State under Lokanātha—a man of noble descent, whose resources were enjoyed by the Brāhmaṇas, the virtuous peoble and the community, and who was known for his prowess and the strength of his arms. This officer approached the king, through his son *Rājaputra* Lakshmīnātha as *dūtaka*, with a prayer for a plot of land in the forest region (*aṭavī-bhūkhaṇḍa*) in the *vishaya* of the name of Suvvuṅga, whereupon he wanted to erect a temple of Ananta-nārāyaṇa and settle more than a hundred Brāhmaṇas versed in the four Vedas, and whereby he desired to meet the recurring expenses of all materials for the daily worship of the deity.

The document explicitly mentions the amount of land in *pāṭaka* and *droṇa*, as in all East Bengal inscriptions referred to before, alloted individually and in some cases jointly to the grantees. We also find the name of Lokanātha's Minister of Peace and War

(*Sāndhivigrahika*) was Praśāntadeva, who executed the document, probably on the king's behalf.

This plate refers to an age of anarchy (*mātsyanyāya*) in Bengal, i.e. the time after the death of Harsha, when the whole country plunged into political disorder and confusion, and before the rise of the Pāla kingdom in the 8th century A.D. The Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, found no prominent sign of Buddhism in Kāmarūpa. This East Bengal plate of Lokanātha also does not contain even a latent allusion to Buddhism in this part of the country. The king's ancestors were devotees of Śaṅkara and his Brāhmaṇa officer Pradoshaśarman set up an image of Anantaṇārāyaṇa. The prevalence of Brāhmanic religion in Eastern Bengal at the time may, therefore, be rightly inferred also from the mention in the inscription of the sacred fires, the Paurānic deities and Brāhmaṇas versed in the Vedic lore. According to Yuan Chwang who travelled south to Samataṭa from Kāmarūpa, the former country was on the sea-side and was low and moist. The East Bengal climate of to-day is exactly the same as in the Chinese pilgrim's time. He, however, found more than 30 Buddhist monasteries, and also about 2000 Buddhist brethren, all adherents of the Sthavira school. But he found 100 Deva temples and numerous Digambara Nirgranthas. While he was at Samataṭa, he gathered information of six other countries not visited by him, but all lying near and beyond the hills on the sea-side in the east, viz. the Burmese lands, Pegu, Siam, Cambodia and perhaps Java also. No name of any king of Samataṭa is mentioned as reigning during his time.

It is to this interval between Harsha's death and the rise of the Buddhist dynasty of the Pālas of Bengal, i.e. the period approximately between 660 A.D. to 750 A.D. that we shall have to assign the rule in East Bengal of the kings of the Khaḍga dynasty. Our friend Dr. R. C. Majumdar,[18] relying on the palaeography of the Ashrafpur and Deulbari inscriptions and the Chinese evidence, thinks that the dynasty of the Khaḍga kings may be said to have established their supremacy almost immediately after Harshavardhana's time.

All that we know definitely of the history of this dynasty can be learnt from two copper-plate grants,[19] discovered along with a bronze *chaitya* about half a century ago, by a villager during the process of levelling a mound in the neighbourhood of a tank in Ashrafpur about 30 miles N. E. of Dacca and about 5 miles from the Sital-Lakhyā river, and from the Śarvvāṇī image[20] inscription of Queen Prabhāvatī, discovered sometime during the first decade of the present century, in or near a village called Deulbari, situated about 14 miles south of Comilla in the district of Tippera. We fully agree with Mr. N. K. Bhattasali in believing that these Khaḍga inscriptions cannot be assigned a date posterior to the beginning of the 8th century A D. But we disagree with the

18 *Early History of Bengal*, published by the Dacca University, 1924, p. 23 and *J. A. S. B.* Vol. XIX, 1923, p. 378.

19 *Proceedings of the A. S. B.*, March 4, 1885. and Mr. Ganga Mohan Laskar's *Memoirs of the A. S. B.*, Vol. I, No. 6, pp. 85-91.

20 *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XVII. No. 24, pp. 357, f.

view of the late Mr. Ganga Mohan Laskar and late Mr. R. D. Banerjee,[21] regarding the time when this dynasty may have flourished in Eastern Bengal, as both of them put it later. It is also difficult to endorse Dr. R. C. Majumdar's reading of the year in Plate B as 73 or 79. Attention may be drawn to the fact that the day of the month in the plate, whether it be 25 or 28, is indicated by the system of letter-numerals, the first sign being a symbol for 20, and the second for either 5 or 8. The use of two different systems in two successive lines in the same inscription for indicating number cannot easily be explained, although one may admit that the first symbol in the reading of the year-number is really a puzzling one.

Let us now cull what historical information we can about this dynasty from the texts of the inscriptions. The names of the three reigning kings of this Khaḍga dynasty, disclosed by these inscriptions, are Khaḍgodyama, his son Jātakhaḍga and his son Devakhaḍga. We have also learnt the name of the last king's son was Rājarāja or Rājarājabhaṭṭa. Both the copper-plate charters of Devakhaḍga were issued from his camp at Karmāntavāsaka, and both were written by a Buddhist scribe, Pūradāsa by name. The name of the *dūtaka* in the second plate is Yajñavarman,—the *dūtaka's* name in the first plate, dated the (regnal) year 13, being illegible. The date of the second plate is of doubtful reading. The Khaḍga kings were devout Buddhists. The Buddha has been invoked

[21] Monograph on the Pālas of Bengal, *Memoirs A. S. B.*, Vol V, No. 3, p. 67.

in the opening verse of both the plates. In a verse in the second plate Khaḍgodyama is said to have been successful in making conquests on earth, after having shown devotion towards the Sugata (the Buddha), his Dharma and his Saṅgha. It is, however, not clear from this plate whether he was a king even before launching forth on these conquests. There can remain no doubt from the statement in the Śarvvāṇī image inscription that Khaḍgodyama was a *nṛipādhirāja* (overlord of rulers). This indicates that in this dynasty it was he who first made successful attempt to establish his royal supremacy in East Bengal. Dr. Majumdar feels inclined to connect these Khaḍgas, with the Khaḍgis, whose existence can be traced, as he says, at least to a date as late as the 14th century A.D. ; and he presumes that "this dynasty of Khaḍgas came to Eastern Bengal in the train of the Tibetans and the Nepalese during the troublesome days that followed the death of Harshavardhana." In the absence of definite evidence regarding this point, we should hold this view of the learned Doctor as tentative, and think that the surname *Khaḍga* may have represented an indigenous Kshatriya family of East Bengal and is not an outlandish name. The second king of the line, Jātakhaḍga, son of Khaḍgodyama, is described as "having annihilated his enemies by means of his prowess, just as wind destroys a straw and an elephant a number of horses." So this king had also to pass through stormy days. The third king of the dynasty was the second king's son and successor named Devakhaḍga, the donor of the two grants mentioned above. He is stated in the

image inscription to have been "a maker of donations" (*dānapatiḥ*), "majestic" (*pratāpī*) and possessing a sword which could subdue his foes" (*jitārikhaḍgaḥ*). The two plates from a muniment of the grant of some plots of land measured by the *pāṭaka* and *droṇavāpa* area, made by king Devakhaḍga, whose kingdom seems to have been in the enjoyment of peace. His enemies are found to have been conquered and he had under him a host of feudal rulers who paid him court and hostile kings were also "forced to offer him obeisance at his footstool." The couchant bull (significant of Śaivism) in the seal of plate B indicates a kind of incongruity because the rulers of this dynasty are avowedly Buddhists. The donee in both the plates appears to be the revered Buddhist teacher, Saṅghamitra, and his monastery, to the support of which the proceeds of the land were to be applied. These instructions were issued for all *vishayapatis*, and other administrative agencies and the householders of the villages concerned. The first gift was made by king Devakaḍga for the longivity of his son, Rājarājabhaṭṭa, who is mentioned as simply Rājarāja (perhaps for the sake of poetical exigency) in the second plate, which only ratifies the grant already made by this pious prince for the sake of the *ratnatraya* (the Buddhist triad), in order to destroy "the fears of three *bhavas*". The mention of the four monastic institutions (*vihāra-vihārikā-chatushṭaya*) is important as affording a trace of the existence of Buddhism in East Bengal at such an early period. The chief queen Prabhāvatī's name is mentioned in plate A as being in possession of some land which king Devakhaḍga gave

away to the Buddhist monasteries. There is reference in the second plate to one king as *Bṛihatparameśvara* (the over-lord) and one person named Udīrṇakhaḍga, as being the first disposers of some land to other donees, but which are now made into gifts again by the heir apparent Rājarājabhaṭṭa. The Śaivvāṇī image inscription also mentions these three kings, and announces that Mahādevī Prabhāvatī, the queen-consort of king Devakhaḍga, caused the image of the goddess to be plated with gold out of devotion. The reverence paid to an eight-armed image of Śarvvāṇī, undoubtedly a goddess of the Brāhmanic pantheon, by the queen of a devout Buddhist monarch of East Bengal, clearly indicates that the different religious sects bore a spirit of religious toleration towards each other in a very high degree. Such religious toleration was also in evidence during the whole period of administration of the North-Eastern empire of the Pālas of Bengal.

The name Devakhaḍga reminds us of the name of another king of the same name, Devagupta, of the Later Gupta dynasty. We feel tempted to regard them almost as contemporaries, as Devagupta was the son of Ādityasena who ruled in 672 A.D. We have stated in the chapter on the Later Guptas of Magadha that the Eastern Indian king of the name of Devavarman referred to by the Corean traveller, Hwui Lun, who visited India sometime during the latter half of the 7th century A.D., cannot be identified with Devakhaḍga.

I-tsing also records that Seng-chi, another priest, came to India by the southern sea-route towards the close of the 7th century A.D. and arrived at Samataṭa.

He writes[22] :—" The king of that country, named Rājabhaṭa (*patu*), a upāsaka, greatly reverenced the three objects of worship, and devoted himself to his religious duties". This description of king Rājabhaṭa cannot but remind one of that[23] of prince Rājarāja, son of Devakhaḍga, also called Rājarājabhaṭṭa in plate A "by whom, the destroyer of the fears of the three *bhavas*, the gift of his own land was given to the triad". Hence there may be no doubt left about the identification of the Buddhist king Rājabhaṭa mentioned in the Chinese record as Devakhaḍga's son. So Devakhaḍga and his son Rājarājabhaṭṭa flourished towards the end of the 7th century A.D. The latter may also have lived sometime in the first quarter of the 8th century A.D. We are not aware of any other ruler ot the Khaḍga dynasty after Rājarājabhaṭṭa or Rājabhaṭa. The condition of the country in all parts of Northern and North-Eastern kingdoms at the time was quite unsettled, for we read of another ambitious king, Yośovarman of Kanauj, starting a military expedition for making conquests in India, specially directed againt the Magahanāha (king of Magadha), who is also called the *Gaüḍa* (i.e. the king of Gauḍa), and this adventure of the conqueror is found recorded, as we said once before, in a Prakrit Epic called *Gaüḍavaho* ("The slaying of the Gauḍa king"), written by a famous poet Vākpatirāja, living under the patronage of Yośovarman. It has also been

22 *Life of Hiuen Tsiang* (Beal), 1911 Edition, Introduction pp. xl-xli.

23 *Of* the line :—*dattaṁ ratnatrayāya tribhava-bhaya-bhidā yena dānaṁ svabhūmeḥ*.

said before, that Gauḍa in the latter half of the 7th and the whole of the 8th century A.D. formed part of the kingdom of Magadha under the last few kings of the Later Gupta dynasty. Yaśovarman aspired to establish a lord-paramountcy in Northern India, and probably thought that the Later Gupta king then on the throne was a great enemy who must be subdued if he was to fulfil his dream of establishing an empire of the type of early Gupta emperors, or that of Harshavardhana. After having defeated and killed in battle the Gauḍa-Magadha king, Yaśovarman is described[24] as having proceeded towards the Vaṅga kingdom on the sea-side in the south and compelled the Vaṅgas, strengthened by troops of unnumbered elephants, to submit to him. Historians of Bengal suppose that king Jīvitagupta II, the last known king of the Later Gupta dynasty, was perhaps the Gauḍādhipa who was killed by Yaśovarman. We cannot, however, be sure that it was not Vishṇugupta, father of Jīvitagupta II. It may also be conjectured that Yaśovarman's enemy in Vaṅga (Samataṭa) was Rājarājabhaṭṭa of the Khaḍga dynasty. There appeared again a period of anarchy in Bengal, as also in other parts of Northern India, when the meteoric career of Yaśovarman (731 A.D. the date of his Chinese mission) of Kanauj, was ended by Lalitāditya, king of Kashmir.

From a new source,[25] a stone inscription (*praśasti*) discovered only a few years ago (1925-26) at the old monastery (*vihāra*) at Nālandā in Magadha,

[24] *Gauḍa-vaho*, vv 418 20.

[25] *Epi. Ind.* Vol. XX, No. 2, pp. 37 ff.

it is learnt that Mālāda, a son of the prime minister (*mantrin*) of Yaśovarmmadeva, made certain gifts to the temple (*prāsāda*) which was built here by King Bālāditya in honour of the Buddha. The fourth monastery at Nālandā described by Yuan Chwang[26] belonged to King Bālāditya and at its formal opening Buddhist brethren were present from all quarters on the king's invitation, amongst whom there were two Chinese pilgrims. In this eulogy Yaśovarmman, the patron of the donor, is described as a king of great majesty, who rose to eminence "by stamping his foot on the heads of all kings," and "dispelled the darkness in the shape of all his enemies by means of the canopy of rays of his sword." He was regarded as a *Lokapāla* and could be well compared with the sun-god, "being the cause of the blooming of the lotus viz. the entire earth." Such a description reminds us of the fact that Yaśovarmman carried on a campaign of conquest in Eastern Indian countries, and after killing the Magadhan ruler proceeded even against the king of Vaṅga. This account lends support to the brilliant description of the Prakrit epic the *Gaüḍavaho*. It appears that the monastery, erected by a king of Mid-India afterwards, situated to the north of the one built by Bālāditya, belonged probably to Yaśovarmman who came up to Magadha and Vaṅga in connection with his conquering enterprise, when probably his minister's son Mālāda, made the donation described above.

[26] Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II, pp. 164-165.

Chapter X

The Kingdom of Kāmarūpa.

In the later Purāṇas as well as the *Raghuvaṁśa* of Kālidāsa both the words Prāgjyotisha and Kāmarūpa occur as the name of the old province of Assam. That province included in the past, within its own boundaries in the west, portions of North Bengal, viz. part (if not whole) of the Kuch Bihar State and of the Rangpur district, with the river Karatoyā as the western boundary. Some portions of China and the Himālayan regions also formed its northern section and a portion of East Bengal was included in it towards the South-West. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, however, mention Prāgjyotisha as a town (*pura*) and not as a country. From his description of Raghu's *digvijaya*, it appears that Kālidāsa intended to apply the name, Kāmarūpa, to the province and the name, Prāgjyotisha, to its capital. The most early and historically important mention of Kāmarūpa is found in the Allahabad pillar inscription[1] of Samudragupta, along with the names of other *pratyanta* States, such as Samataṭa, Ḍavāka, Nepāla and Kartṛpura etc. which lay outside the boundaries of the imperial Gupta empire, but which offered allegiance to that paramount

[1] Fleet, *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 1, ll. 20-21.

house and paid it some sort of tribute. Varāhamihira[2] also mentions Prāgjyotisha amongst the countries in the east.

In almost all inscriptional records of the Kāmarūpa kings, their origin is traced from Vishuṇ's son, Naraka, who was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, after whom reigned his son (according to some epigraphs, his brother) named Vajradatta. After the last mentioned king there was an interval of about three thousand years, according to a statement[3] in the Nidhanpur copper-plate grants of King Bhāskaravarman, during which ruled many a king of the same race in Kāmarūpa. The calculation of time in that inscription may be taken as roughly correct.

We learn from that inscription that the first prince of the Varman dynasty of Kāmarūpa who became prominent in the political arena of North-Eastern India was Pushyavarman, who, according to the calculation of Mm. Padmanath Bhattacharyya,[4] flourished about 1600 years before now i.e. in the first half of the fourth century A.D. In all probability, he was contemporaneous with the first imperial Gupta sovereign Chandragupta I. Pushyavarman's son Samudravarman is compared in that inscription to a fifth *Samudra* (ocean) as it were, but only with this difference that unlike the latter which is always disturbed by larger fish swallowing the smaller ones, King Samudra was free from the *mātsyanyāya* troubles (i.e. those of anarchy and disorder). Like the natural

2 *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, Chap. XIV, v. 6.

3 Cf. v. 6, *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 73.

4 *Kāmarūpa-śasanāvalī*, p. 28, fn. 6.

Samudra, this Samudravarman was a king "with his riches always displayed to view." He is also described as "smart in single combats." The reference to the *mātsyanyāya* suggests that Samudravarman's ancestor or ascestors had to pass through troublous times, but his own reign was comparatively peaceful. A natural conjecture may be made regarding the name Samudravarman. Probably he was so named by his father in imitation of the name of the great victor, Samudragupta of the imperial Gupta dynasty. The *pratyanta* States of North and North-East India, including Kāmarūpa, which were forced by the Gupta conqueror to enter into a bond of subordinate alliance with him, are stated in the Allahabad inscription[5] to have gratified that monarch by payment of all kinds of tribute (*sarva-kara-dāna*), obedience to his commands (*ājñākaraṇa*) and approach for paying court to him (*praṇāmāgamana*). It has been shown elsewhere by the present writer[6] that the relation of the famous Raghu with the lord of Prāgjyotisha as described by Kālidāsa in the *Raghuvaṁśa* during his military expeditions is exactly similar to that of the Gupta monarch Samudragupta with the king of Kāmarūpa. For we are told in the *Raghuvaṁśa* that when Raghu crossed the Lauhitya river (the Brahmaputra), the lord of Prāgjyotisha began to tremble in fear, but he later pleased the advancing conqueror by paying him homage by presentation of excellent

[5] *Op. Cit.*, ll. 22-23.

[6] *Vide* his paper on "Historical basis and model for Kālidāsa's description of Raghu's conquest"—*Proceedings* and *Transactions of the Second Oriental Conference*, 1922, pp. 333-334.

war-elephants with which he used to encounter other conquerors and also "worshipped the shadow of his (Raghu's) feet with the offerings of flowers in the shape of precious gems". Kālidāsa's poetical description was undoubtedly influenced by the actual historical occurrences of his time. The probability of the existence of such a relation betwee the imperial Gupta sovereign and the Kāmarūpa king can also be inferred from the description in the Nidhanpur plates of the opulence of Samudravarman, who is compared to the ocean "with all its riches displayed to view". There seems to be no doubt that the Kāmarūpa king was rich enough to gratify the Gupta over-lord with precious presents and thus save his own kingdom from being incorporated into the growing Gupta empire, so that Kāmarūpa could preserve its own autonomy as a frontier eastern province, attached, however, to that empire by bonds of subordinate alliance.

The king who succeeded Samudravarman was Balavarman who possessed a very strong army, which always kept the enemies engaged in warfare. Next ruled in Kāmarūpa his son, Kalyāṇavarman a king described as free from all kinds of vices. The name of the next ruler was Gaṇapati who was very virtuous and was known for his large charities. He was born, as the inscription records, to remove war and dissension from the land. After him reigned his son Mahendravarman who was a great supporter of sacrificial performances (*yajñavidhīnāṁ=āspadaṁ*). We have seen before that revival of sacrificial institutions by kings of other parts of North-Eastern India e.g.

the Maukharis and the Later Guptas of Magadha, was a special social feature of those times. Mahendravarman's son and successor was Nārāyaṇavarman who is reputed to have possessed a high knowledge of military and political affaris (*adhigata-saṁkhyārtha*). This king was a competent administrator and was able to maintain order in his kingdom. His political sagacity and prowess passed to his worthy son, named Mahābhūtavarman. The latter is also referred to under the name of Bhūtivarman both in the *Harshacharita* and in one place (1. 51) of the Nidhanpur grant. Under that name he had at first made a grant of the land in Mayūra-śālmal = āgrahāra in the *vishaya* of Chandrapuri situated, in the opinion of Mm. P. N. Bhattacharyya,[7] somewhere in North-East Bengal near Rangpur in the vicinity of the Karatoyā river. The recipients of this grant were a large number of Brāhmaṇas, exceeding two hundred, belonging to different *gotras* whose allotments were separately mentioned in the copper-plate document which was accidentally burnt by fire. In consideration of the fact that the loss of the original document might render the descendants of the original grantees liable to payment of state revenue, King Bhāskaravarman commanded the issue of a fresh copper-plate grant. It was a legalised renewal of the former grant by King Bhūtivarman which was made about a century before Bhāskara's own time. Mm. P. N. Bhattacharyya[8] has very properly drawn the

[7] *Op. Cit.*, p. 5.

[8] *Op. Cit.*, p. 27, fn. 8.

attention of scholars to the second verse of the Nidhanpur plates composed outwardly in honour of the great god Maheśvara, which, however, yields, on account of pun on a few words in it, a second interpretation which shows that *Parameśvara* (king) Bhūtivarman had a circle of feudatory rulers under his subjection (*bhogīśvara-kṛta-parikaraṁ*) and that he was able to captivate the whole of Kāmarūpa by his (benign) glance (*īkshaṇa-jita-Kāmarūpaṁ*). It appears that for the first time after the decline of the power of the imperial Gupta monarchs in Northern India, to whom the rulers of Kāmarūpa had been bound by a tie of subordinate alliance since the time of Samudragupta, Bhūtivarman succeeded in assuming virtual independence in Kāmarūpa, and bringing other rulers under his political authority. If this be a correct view, we may take Bhūtivarman (or Mahābhūtavarman) to have flourished towards the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A. D. According to such a view, the next five generations of kings, after having freed themselves from the Gupta allegiance, appear to have ruled in Kāmarūpa with the same status as the Maukharis of the Ayodhyā region and the Later Guptas of Magadha.

After Bhūtivarman his son, Chandramukha-(varman), reigned in Kāmarūpa. He possessed a good knowledge of various arts which enabled him to dispel the ignorance of his own people. He was succeeded by his son, named Sthitavarman. He enjoyed royal fortune of a high order and his treasury was always full of untold riches. After him his son, King Susthitavarman (alias Śrī-mṛgāṅka) ascended the throne.

The way in which he is described in the inscription forces upon the readers the conclusion that he attained a supreme position of lordship in his kingdom. He had use of the imperial title, *mahārājādhirāja*. He relied solely on his own power for carrying on the administration of his realm. It has been noticed in a preceding chapter that an expedition was led against this Susthitavarman by the Later Gupta king Mahāsenagupta, a contemporary of King Prabhākaravardhana of Thaneswar, towards the close of the sixth century. It is clear that hostilities broke out at about this time between the kingdom of Magadha (including also Gauḍa) and that of Kāmarūpa. In the war that ensued between them, Mahāsenagupta achieved a clear victory over Susthitavarman, and, as has been shown before, he advanced towards his eastern enemy's country and defeated him there. A hint, though veiled, to this defeat of the Kāmarupa king, can be detected in a verse (v. 19) in Bhāskaravarman's own charter, where it is stated that King Susthitavarman "gave away the goddess of royal fortune, like the earth, to supplicants". This perhaps indicates that Susthitavarman, formerly so great a reigning monarch, who had deprived other kings of their high position and ruled over his hard-earned extensive dominion, surrendered his authority to Mahāsenagupta, his victor. The author of *Harshacharita* also describes this Kāmarūpa king (through the mouth of his own messenger to Harsha), as being very proud since his birth and also war-like, steady and majestic, though not harsh. This king's eldest son is named in the Nidhanpur grant as Supratishṭhi-

tavarman, his younger brother being the famous king, Bhāskaravarman. It does not appear clear from any other source if Bhāskara's elder brother ever ruled as king of Kāmarūpa. But some significance ought to be attached to the verse of the inscription in which he is, under the figure paronomasia, stated to have made use of his prosperity for the good of 'another person' (*Yasyonnati [ḥ] parārthā*). We feel constrained to explain the word '*para*' (= a foreigner) by referring it to the Later Gupta king, Mahāsenagupta, whose vassal he probably became. If he ever reigned as a king, he might have conducted the administration of Kāmarūpa on behalf of the king of Magadha, who occupied that kingdom after defeating his father, Susthitavarman. Mm. P.N. Bhattacharyya[9] supposes that Supratishṭhitavarman reigned only for a few years after having augmented his royal fortune, but it was his younger brother, Bhāskaravarman who enjoyed the fruits of his actions. Hence he thinks that the word *para* in the compound *parārthā* alludes to this younger brother. Probably Bhāskaravarman, on account of his military ability, good and pleasing manners and patriotic feeling was liked by the people of the province and preferred by them for the kingship. He might have been chosen king by the subjects during the life-time of his elder brother, who had therefore to abdicate the throne in his favour. Had he not ruled in Kāmarūpa before his younger brother, though for a short time, the court-poet of Bhāskaravarman would never have devoted two verses in his honour in the inscription.

[9] *Op. Cit.*p., 31, fn. 3.

But we have no mention of him as a reigning prince in other records e.g. *Harshacharita* and the Nālandā seal[10] of Bhāskara (found along with the seals of his ally Harsha).

Before entering into the detailed history of King Bhāskaravarman and his kingly career, we give below the genealogy of his dynasty, as obtained from a study of the Nidhanpur copper-plate grant, which contains the names of as many as twelve successive kings, reigning before Bhāskaravarman himself, during a period of nearly three centuries from the commencement of Gupta rule in India. The (broken) Nālandā seal also contains the names of eight predecessors of that king with those of their queens. *Harshacharita* again corroborates this genealogy, with slight variations here and there in the spelling of some of the names, at least upto the fourth ancestor of Bhāskaravarman. The pedigree stands thus :—

4th century A. D. (probably the last three quarters).	1. Pushyavarman I 2. Samudravarman (= Dattadevī) I 3. Balavarman (= Ratnavatī) I

[10] *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1919, p. 302, and 1920, pp. 151-152.

5th century A. D.

4. Kalyāṇavarman
(= Gandharvavatī)
I
5. Gaṇapati (-varman)[11]
(= Yajñavatī)
I
6. Mahendravarman
(= Suvratā)
I
7. Nārāyaṇavarman
(= Devavatī)
I

6th century A. D.

8. Mahābhūtavarman,
alias Bhūtivarman[12]
(= Vijñānavatī)
I
9. Chandramukha (-varman)
(=Bhogavatī)
I
10. Sthitavarman[13]
(= Nayanadevī)
I
11. Susthitavarman,[14]
alias Mṛgāṅka
(=Śyāmādevī)
I

7th century A. D.
(the first half)

12. Supratishṭhitavarman | 13. Bhāskaravarman, alias Kumāra[15]

11 Mentioned simply as Gaṇapati in the Nidhanpur plates.

12 Mentioned under this second name in *Harshacharita*.

13 Spelt *Sthitivarman* in *Harshacharita*.

14 Spelt *Susthiravarman* in *Harshacharita*.

15 Mentioned by both names in *Harshacharita* and by Hiuen Tsiang simply as *Kumārarāja*.

Bhāskaravarman, known also as Kumāra, was the greatest monarch of the Varman dynasty of Kāmaūrpa. He was a contemporary of King Harshavardhana of of Thaneswar—Kanauj and probably outlived the latter by a few years. It has been noticed in a previous chapter that there existed no friendly relation between the Magadhan and Kāmarūpa houses. But we also said that Mādhavagupta, son of Mahāsenagupta, made an alliance with Harshavardhana, probably to fortify himself against the hostile Kāmarūpa king, who had now become so assertive, and kings of other eastern countries. We have seen from a previous chapter how at such a time another aspirant for power in the political horizon of the East, viz. Śaśāṅka, King of Gauḍa, was attempting to rise. The gradual attainment of political supremacy by that king must have alarmed the Kāmarūpa king as it did even the North Indian suzerain Harsha, and therefore both of them hankered after combining with each other, and forming a confederacy, of which Mādhavagupta of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha also became a member.

The most memorable event in the career of Bhāskaravarman was his friendship with Harsha, which is referred to by the latter's court-poet by the most significant prase *ajaryyaṁ saṅgataṁ* i. e. "undying association", and compared with the traditionally famous alliance between Arjuna and Kṛshṇa, and between Karṇa and Duryodhana. Before a full account of the nature of this alliance is given, it may be marked here that the description of a foreign potentate like Bhāskara and his powers, as given by

Harsha's court-poet, may be relied upon as making a near approach to truth. Such a view seems to be reasonable in consideration of the fact that Bāṇa's tendency should naturally be to minimise the virtues of a distant foreign ruler, seeking a friendly alliance with his own patron king. We propose to give here, with great caution, a summarised version of this episode as presented by Bāṇa.[16] It is quite natural to think that Bhāskaravarman must have felt it very difficult for him to tolerate the gradual rise into prominence of the king of the neighbouring province of Gauḍa, and he therefore might have cherished for some time past a longing for contracting a friendship with Harsha. Rather it was a reciprocal longing. An occasion for despatching a messenger to Harsha for the contrivance of such an alliance presented itself to the Kāmarūpa king when he heard that the Gauḍa king (Śaśāṅka) had combined with the king of Mālava against the Maukhari ruler Grahavarman, the husband of Harsha's sister. The news of the treacherous murder of King Rājyavardhana by the Gauḍa king might also have contributed towards the hastening of Bhaskara's despatch of an embassy to Harsha for seeking the latter's alliance against their common enemy. When Harsha completed, during his expedition at the head of a vast army against Śaśāṅka, one day's march after his first halt on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, not far from his capital at Thaneswar, he gave audience to Kumāra's (i.e. Bhāskara's) confidential messenger, who reached his camp with enormous loads of valu-

16 Cf. *Harshacharita*—Chap. VII.

able presents from the lord of Prāgjyotisha, the chief amongst which was a miraculous parasol of very high worth and merit, the hereditary property of Kāmarūpa kings. This meeting took place somewhere in Northern India between Thaneswar and Kanauj. After exchange of cordiality, the messenger announced that his great master, Bhāskara, desired to form an ever-lasting friendship with the new *chakravartin* emperor (i.e. Harsha himself). The latter also heartily welcomed the offer. In course of delivery of the verbal message the chief of the embassy declared that Bhāskara had been cherishing since his boyhood a a firm resolve never to bow down before the feet of anybody but the god Śiva.[17] The messenger then gives his own idea as to the various means by which his master could fulfil such a unique boast. In his opinion, his king could not do so except in one of three ways[18] viz. by (1) conquering the whole earth, (2) by courting death and by (3) accepting friendship with an unparalleled warrior like Harsha as an ally. The suggestion here is clear that, as neither of the first two alternatives is possible, Bhāskara must be anxious

[17] This reminds one of similar boastful desire of Yaśodharman in the Mandasor inscription. cf. the line :—

"स्थाणोरन्यत्र प्रणतिकृपणातां प्रापितं नोत्तमाङ्गम् ॥

Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, No. 33, p. 146.

[18] Cf. the following passage from *Harshacharita*, Chap. VII :—

"अयमस्य शैशवादारभ्य संकल्पः स्थेयान् स्थाणुपदारविन्दद्वयादृते नाहमन्यं नमस्कुर्य्यामिति । ईदृशश्चायं मनोरथस्त्रिभुवनदुर्लभस्त्रयाणामन्यतमेन सम्पद्यते, सकलभुवनविजयेन वा, मृत्युना वा, यदि वा प्रचण्डप्रतापज्वलनदिग्दाहेन जगत्येकवीरेण देवोपमेन मित्रेण" ।

to try the third. The messenger then mentions the several purposes, such as collection of wealth and arms, annexation of territories and matrimonial settlement, which induce one king to contract friendship with another. But Harsha was so great a monarch and ruled such an extensive empire, that there was no chance of his falling a victim to these allurements. This was all the greater reason for Bhāskara to make an offer, through this messenger, of an undying alliance with Harsha. This might be properly interpreted as a hint that the Kāmarūpa king was anxious to offer his personal services and remain under obligations to the emperor of Northern India. The messenger expected to be honoured with a favourable reply to carry back to his own king, and added that in case of his compliance with the proposal Bhaskara would proceed to meet personally, the imperial sovereign. On the other hand Harsha himself, on having heard reports of the high accomplishments of King Kumāra, had for some time past been desirous of becoming his friend, and so on the arrival of the embassy with such valuable and rich presents from Kāmarūpa he began to regard that eastern king as a *paroksha suhṛt* i.e. 'an ally without appointment.' He, therefore, unhesitatingly gave his immediate acquiscence to the proposal, and eagerly looked forward to a personal interview with the Kāmarūpa ruler at an early date. It seems very probable that Harsha wanted Bhāskara to assist him in his military campaign against his elder brother's murderer, the Gauḍa king. Moreover, the Northern emperor also planned a through military expedition for subjugating the other parts of India.

Such was the nature of the alliance between these two rulers.

After having thus allied himself with Harsha in the first part of that king's reign, Bhāskara undoubtedly felt happy and secure in his own realm. The late Mr. R. D. Banerji[19] guessed that, as a result of this alliance between the two kings, they both succeeded in defeating Śaśāṅka against whom Harsha had made elaborate military preparations. *Harshacharita* ends abruptly at a point when we find Harsha returning to his moving camp on the banks of the Ganges after the recovery of his sister, Rājyaśrī, from the Vindhya forests. So Bāṇa could not mention the results of his patron's campaign against the Gauḍa king. As has been shown in a previous chapter, the results of this expedition can be learnt from the text of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*,[20] where it is described that Harsha in course of his pursuit of the king of Gauḍa came upto the beautiful city of Puṇḍra (in North Bengal), and then having defeated that king (named in the book as Soma=Śaśāṅka), whom he forced at last to remain confined within the bounds of his own country so that he might not in future aspire to proceed again towards the West, he himself returned leisurely to his own country. But it must be remembered that this Buddhist treatise does not mention Bhāskara an ally of Harsha in this campaign. The

19 *Bāṅgālār Itihāsa*, 2nd edition, Vol. I, p. 108

20 Cf. the lines from this book (written in loose Sanskrit), pp. 634 35, already quoted in this dissertation, Chap. VII, p. 152.

late Dr. Vincent Smith's conjecture[21] that the Gauḍa king "escaped with little loss" and that he being still in power in 619-20 A.D., "his kingdom probably became subject to Harsha at a later date," appears to be correct. Hence there seems to be no doubt that Harsha's first campaign against Bengal brought him partial success only, and that he could not at all raid and occupy Karṇasuvarṇa, the centre of the Gauḍa kingdom at the time, during this expedition, and Śaśāṅka must have continued in power at that place at least till 619-20 A.D. It should be kept in mind that this expedition of Harsha and its results must have taken place shortly after his accession to the throne in 606 A.D. and the time taken by that achievement could not have been longer than a year or so.

On the other hand, it is known from the Nidhanpur copper-plate grants that King Bhāskaravarman issued his royal charter from his victorious camp situated at Karṇasuvarṇa. It has been pointed out before, that scholars suppose that this place is to be identified with Rāṅgāmāṭi, 12 miles south of Murshidabad, in Central Bengal, which formed a part of the kingdom of Gauḍa with Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) amalgamated with it. The question arises, how and when Bhāskara could come to be in possession of Karṇasuvarṇa, which was at that time one of the four or five chief divisions of Bengal, as mentioned by Yuan Chwang. Bhāskara's moving camp at this place is described as having all military resources, such

[21] *Early History of India*, 3rd ed. p. 339.

as a fleet of boats, elephants, cavalry and infantry. Mm. P. N. Bhattacharyya[22] is of opinion that it can be stated with certainty that Karṇasuvarṇa was under the administration of Bhāskara, when the copper-plate grant to Brāhmaṇas was issued by him from there, and this happened at a time when the two allies (Harsha and Bhāskara) were probably celebrating their victory at that place, after having successfully expelled the Gauḍa king from there. This view of the learned scholar does not seem to be very convincing. He is rather right when he says elsewhere[23] in his corpus of Kāmarūpa inscriptions that the conquest of Karṇa-suvarṇa by the two allies could not be a lasting one, and that the Gauḍa capital was re-occupied by Śaśāṅka after whose death (about 625 A.D.) Harsha might have subjugated it.

To us it seems, however, reasonable that Bhāskara could not probably join his ally personally, when the latter marched against the Gauḍa king in his first campaign. At some later date Harsha might have marched a second time against Śaśāṅka's kingdom in the company of Bhāskara and wrested it either from his own hands or from those of his yet unknown successor some time after his death. It cannot be stated without doubt that Śaśāṅka met death at the hands of his two combined enemies on such an occasion. Hence considering all probabilities, we may be justified in holding the view that Harsha was successful in a second campaign in taking possession of Śaśāṅka's kingdom after the latter's death, and made

[22] *Op. Cit.*, Introduction p. 16 and also pp. 5, 6 and 9.

[23] *Ibid*, Introduction, p. 16, fn. 2.

it over to his ally Bhāskaravarman who might have annexed it to his own kingdom. But we know that the successors of Bhāskara, or even the later kings of other dynasties of Kāmarūpa, could not permanently keep Karṇasuvarṇa under their subjection. The reason for Yuan Chwang not mentioning the name of any king ruling in any of the four or five political divisions of Bengal at that period may be sought in the fact that when he visited (in 643 A.D.) these countries and also Kāmarūpa, he found most of them included in Harsha's own dominion, and some in that of Bhāskaravarman.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar[24] goes a step further than the Mahāmahopādhyāya and thinks that when Bhāskara "aided the Chinese expedition against the successor of Harshavardhana" and the latter was defeated, "he (Bhāskara) made himself master of Eastern India" and "pitched his victorious camp in the capital of his late rival Śaśāṅka, and thus increased the power and prestige of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa to an extent never dreamt of before". This seems to us to be an extreme view, according to which Bhāskara availed himself of the opportunity, offered by the utter confusion following the death of his former ally, the great Harsha, of "feeding fat his grudge", his grudge being, according to Dr. Majumdar, due to the fact that after Śaśāṅka's death and consequent absorption of his kingdom by Harsha, "Bhāskaravarman came to be looked upon more as a feudatory vassal than an ally". Have we any evidence that there was any

[24] *Ancient Indian History and Civilisation*, p. 348.

weakening of the alliance that was formed so early in the reigns of both these monarchs and apparently continued undisturbed till so late as the early part of 643 A.D., when King Bhāskaravarman offended Harshavardhana by his indiscretion in refusing to comply with the latter's request to send Yuan Chwang[25] immediately from Kāmarūpa to that emperor's camp? The visit too of Bhāskaravarman along with the Chinese pilgrim to Harsha which took place on the banks of the Ganges near Rājmahal in Eastern India, when the latter was returning home after his attack on Koṅgoda in the South-east, testifies to the temporary nature of the misunderstanding.

The Mahāmahopādhyāya considers it possible that Bhāskara had been at Karṇasuvarṇa very early in life, when he might have accompanied Harsha during his expedition against Śaśāṅka, while Dr. Majumdar thinks that the Kāmarūpa king was there for a long time, even after the death not only of the Gauḍa king, but also of his former ally Harsha. Having weighed carefully the two extreme views of these two scholars, we have adopted a middle view that Karṇasuvarṇa passed into the hands of Bhāskara, through Harsha's conquest of it, at some date later than his first campaign against Śaśāṅka, which was led by him immediately after the murder of Rājyavardhana, and that this second campaign of Harsha might have taken place either during the life-time of Śaśāṅka or after his death. Another suggestion offers itself in this connection, that Karṇasuvarṇa might not at any time

[25] Beal—*Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, pp. 172 ff.

have formed any part of the Kāmarūpa kingdom at all, but Bhāskara might only have pitched his *jaya-skandhāvāra* (victorious moving camp) there, as an ally of Harsha during the latter's second campaign referred to above, when the emperor came to Bengal for conquests. On this view both North Bengal and and Central Bengal were added to Harsha's empire, and not to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa even in part.

We give below a brief account of the Chinese pilgrim's visit to Bhāskaravarman's kingdom, of the temporary straining of the friendly relations existing so long between the Thaneswar and the Kāmarūpa houses, and of a happy compromise after a very short time. When Yuan Chwang was residing at Nālandā monastery for the second time in 643 A.D., and attending the discourses of his teacher Śīlabhadra, whom the Buddhist pilgrim often consulted regarding his philosophical doubts, an invitation by letter through a messenger reached that teacher from "Kumārarāja of Eastern India" (i.e. Bhāskaravarman), requesting the latter to send without delay the Chinese pilgrim to his court. But His Eminence, Śīlabhadra, had to refuse the invitation because he had already arranged that the pilgrim should next go to the court of Śīlādityarāja (i.e. Harshavardhana), before his return to China directly from there. A second invitation was sent by Bhāskara and that also could not be complied with. The king became displeased with the teacher of Nālandā monastery and renewed his invitation pointing out that by personal meeting with the learned Buddhist pilgrim he expected "the opening of the germ of religion" within himself, and

that he should not therefore, by such refusal, cause the world to remain plunged in ignorance, and thus hinder "the deliverance and salvation of the world." The Kāmarūpa king even threatened to destroy the monastery of Nālandā, by swooping down on it with his equipped army and elephants, just as King Śaśāṅka in recent times brought about "the destruction of the Law" and "uprooted the Bodhi tree" at Gayā. The pilgrim, however, agreed to go to Kāmarūpa, specially because he learnt from Śīlabhadra that within its territories "the Law of Buddha has not widely extended." Śīlabhadra advised the priest to become a friend of Bhāskara and cause his heart to open to the truth (of Buddhism), so that in imitation of the king his own people might as well be converted. But it is a known historical fact, that as Bhāskara was a descendant of the Vaishṇava family (*Vaishṇava-vaṁśaḥ*, as Bāṇa describes) and a great devotee of Maheśvara, the Chinese priest was not successful in his mission of converting him and his people to Buddhism. There is no doubt, however, that by calling this king a Brāhmaṇa by caste, what Yuan Chwang really meant was that Bhāskara was a Brāhmanical Hindu in religion. For we know that he was a Kshatriya by caste, as he claimed his descent from the Kshatriya hero, Bhagadatta of *Mahābhārata* fame. The pilgrim was, however, well received by the king and the members of his court, and highly honoured during his stay in Kāmarūpa for over a month and a half.

We propose now to refer shortly to the misunderstanding between Bhāskara and his ally, regarding this distinguished foreign pilgrim. When

Harsha was on his way back home after his attack on Koṅgoda, probably his last recorded campaign on the people of the Ganjam district in the South-west coast of the Bay of Bengal, the emperor heard of the pilgrim then residing in the court of Kāmarūpa ; and so he sent a messenger to King Kūmararāja requesting him to send Yuan Chwang to his camp at once. Bhāskara, however, used rude language in reply to his ally, saying " he can take my head, but he cannot take the Master of the Law yet". Abrupt came an answer through a messenger from the enraged monarch Harsha, saying "send the head, that I may have it immediately by my messenger who is to bring it here". Naturally Bhāskara got frightened and personally proceeded with a large troop of elephants and ships up the Ganges, taking the Chinese pilgrim along with him, and arrived at the country of Kie-shu-ho-ki-lo (Kajaṅgala, near modern Rajmahal). Here on the north bank of the river the two allies met each other, and a happy and joyful reconciliation took place, and the temporary misunderstanding was thus removed.

The three distinguished persons then advanced up the Ganges and arrived at Kanauj after a march of ninety days and there they attended the religious assembly, held by Harsha's commands, for the recitation of Yuan Chwang's new treatise, extolling the Mahāyāna doctrine, and "exposing the extreme poverty" of the Hīnayāna. To this assembly the disciples of the various Buddhist, Brāhmaṇa and Nirgrantha schools throughout the different kingdoms had been invited ; and the kings of eighteen kingdoms

were present in it. But the Kāmarūpa king received the highest honour from the king of Kanauj as we find him, in the procession of the golden Buddha image, represented under the form of Brahmā with a precious parasol in his hand, and seated to the left of the image on the stately elephant, which he rode along with his friend Harsha, who himself was represented under the godly garb of Lord Śakra, carrying a white chowrie in his hand and seated on the right. The honoured religious guest (the Chinese pilgrim), the state-officers and other princes severally mounted other elephants and they all separately entered the hall of discourse. There the guest from China[26] achieved unopposed the most brilliant success in expounding his thesis, to the greatest chagrin of the unbelievers. After the termination of these ceremonies at Kanauj, which lasted for many days, during which precious and rich gifts were largely made by King Harsha, the latter invited the pilgrim to accompany him to Prayāga, along with King Kumāra of Kāmarūpa, for taking part in the sixth quinquennial assembly to be held at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā on the sands, for the distribution of wealth, food and apparel to indigent and needy people, as well as to the priests and believers in all sectarian religions, who would come there from different parts of Northern India.

The Chinese pilgrim though anxious to depart for home-land agreed to proceed towards Prayāga to attend this religious convocation of Harsha. The kings of other States, including Dhruvabhaṭa of

26 *Ibid*, pp. 177 ff.

Valabhī (Harsha's son-in-law) and Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa, attended this magnificent ceremony, in which on several days the installation of the images of the Buddha, the Ādityadeva (the sun-god) and the Iśvara (the Śiva) took place, and the store of different kinds of wealth, accumulated during the past five years, was exhausted by distribution to the various recipients. On the break-up of the Allahabad convocation, which lasted for seventy-five days, the pilgrim wanted permission to depart homewards after yet another stay for ten days with Harsha, when King Bhāskaravarman earnestly requested Yuan Chwang to accompany him to Kāmarūpa and dwell in his dominions, and receive his religious offerings, promising, in case of the pilgrim's compliance, to "undertake to found one hundred monasteries on the Master's behalf". But the pilgrim could not make any more delay in leaving India. Both Harsha and Bhāskara offered him all sorts of gold coins and other objects, but he accepted nothing, but a cape, "made of coarse skin lined with soft down, which was designed to protect from rain whilst on the road", a gift from the Kāmarūpa king. The latter with Harsha and Dhruvabhaṭa saw the pilgrim again, three days after the first separation, and they took final leave of the traveller. Both these allies were kindly disposed towards Yuan Chwang and they therefore commissioned official guides to accompany the escort.

After this Bhāskara returned to Kāmarūpa, and we know of only another incident in his life. Immediately after Harshavardhana's death, early in 647 A. D. or at the close of 646 A. D., Arjuna or Aruṇāśva, the minister

of the late king of Kanauj usurped the throne, but he had to meet a disastrous defeat from the Chinese envoy led by Wang-hiuen-tse, who succeeded in storming the city of Tirhut with the help of the Tibetan and Nepal kings' forces. During this foreign campaign[27] against the usurper, Harsha's former ally, Bhāskara, " sent in abundant supplies of cattle and accoutrements for the victorious army ". This help of the Kāmarūpa king was undoubtedly offered to the victor, to save his own kingdom from being plunged in the general political confusion, resulting from the death of Harshavardhana without a worthy successor able to keep intact the vast dominions of the Thaneswar-Kanauj house.

For a full account of Bhāskaravarman's history a few words are necessary to describe his personal character. Although this king was always conscious of the glory of his own family and anxious to preserve its prestige before the eyes of the world, the other traits of his personal character were also of a superior order. It has been stated above how with his strong and orthodox faith in Brāhmanic religion he possessed a tolerant mind, eager to receive instruction on Buddhism even from the Chinese traveller. He was always anxious that the darkness of ignorance should be dispelled from the earth. Personally he was devoted to Śaivism which received State support, and his people also were considerably under its influence. The king abided rigidly by the injuctions of the Brāhmanic *śāstras*, regarding the preservation of the

[27] *Vide* V. Smith's *Early History of India*, 3rd ed. p. 353.

different castes and social orders. He is described in the Nidhanpur grant as being created by the Creator for the purpose of re-establishing the institution of castes and orders, which had for a long time past become confused. He propagated, it is told there, the light of *Āryyadharma* by dispelling the darkness of the Kali-age, by a proper expenditure of his revenue on good works of public utility. He caused the deep loyalty of his subjects to be heightened, on account of his power of keeping order, display of modesty and cultivation of close acquaintance with them. His gifts were bounteous, and he could be compared with Śibi for offering succour to the needy by self-sacrifice, and in the matter of timely application of the six political expedients he was as skilful as Bṛhaspati himself. His prowess, perseverance and pride were well-known. Free from the usual vices of kings, Bhāskaravarman was always given to performing virtuous deeds. To quote the words of the inscription, he was, as it were, " the very life of Dharma, the abode of justice, the home of virtues, the treasury of supplicants, the shelter of the fearful and the temple of plenty of Śrī". In short, he was an ideal Hindu monarch of the seventh century in Eastern India.

From the same inscription we know of some State officers working under Bhāskara's Government. The highest State officer who enjoyed the honour of conveying from his king hundreds of royal mandates was Gopāla, who had the distinction of using the five titles of rank beginning with the word *mahat* (*prāpta-pañcha-mahā-sabdaḥ*), which were certainly bestowed on him by the monarch. Either this Gopāla

or a person named Śrīkshi (or Śrīrshi)-Kuṇḍa appears to have been appointed as the boundary-attestor in the above grant, which concerned the demarcation of land to be divided amongst more than two hundred Brāhman grantees. The latter person appears to have been the mayor of the capital city of the district Chandrapurī. The title of his office is called *nāyaka* which, in Arthaśāstra literature,[28] sometimes stands for *nāgarika*. Janārdanasvāmin was the *nyāya-karaṇika*, probably a judicial officer for dispensing justice. There were also present at the time of the execution of the grant the representative of the mercantile interest (*vyavahārins*) named Haradatta and the head of the scribe-class (*kāyasthas*) named Dundhunātha. Vasuvarṇa was the enactor of that royal *śāsana* and it was he who caused it to be composed (*śāsayitā* and *lekhayitā*). The name of the person who was in charge of the royal store-house (*bhāṇḍāgārādhikṛta*) was Divākaraprabha. Dattakāra Pūrṇṇa was the *utkheṭayitā* (probably a collector of taxes) and Kālīya was the *sekyakāra*, the engraver[29] of the copper-plate grant.

Immediately or shortly after Bhāskaravarman's death, which probably followed that of Harshavardhana after a few years, there was, as usual in political affairs, specially in ancient India, an anarchy in Kāmarūpa which brought to an end the dynasty of kings which owed its origin to the ancient King

[28] *Vide* Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, Book I, Chap. 12 and Book II, Chap. 36.

[29] This is the meaning attached to the word by Mm. P. N. Bhattacharyya in his *Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī*, p. 43, foot-notes 6 & 7.

Naraka, and ushered in a new Mlechchha (i.e. non-orthodox) line[30] headed by King Śālastambha, who must have reigned sometime in the latter part of the seventh century A. D. This new line of kings continued to rule in Kāmarūpa from their own capital, Harūppeśvara, situated on the bank of the river Lauhitya (and not from Prāgjyotishapura), for more than three centuries, the last of them being named Tyāgasiṁha. In all probability the king who first overthrew the dynasty of Bhāskaravarman was Śālastambha, after whom his son, Vijaya[31] reigned. Then ruled in succession kings Pālaka, Kumāra and Vajradatta. The genealogy of this family, so far indicated, brings us down almost to the middle of the eighth century A. D. For, we are told in Harjaravarman's inscription that after Vajradatta there reigned in Kāmarūpa a king whose name was Harsha (or Harisha, the Prakritised form of the name), an accomplished and pious administrator who ruled over his people without oppression because he regarded them as his own sons. That this Harsha, king of Kāmarūpa, was a great conqueror who conquered some other countries in Eastern India has been shown in a separate chapter from a stone inscription[32] dated 153 H. E. (=759 A. D.) of the Nepal king Jayadeva II. Harsha is therein said to have gained mastery over the countries of Gauḍa, Uḍra etc, Kaliṅga

30 *Ibid*, Introduction pp. 18 19 and Text (vv. 9-10), p. 94.

31 *Ibid*, pp. 48 49 (*Vide* the copper-plate inscription of Harjaravarman).

32 *Indian Antiquary*, Vol, IX, p. 178 and Fleet *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, Introduction, p. 187.

and Kosala by subduing his enemies with the help of his elephant troops. This king gave his daughter Rājyamatī in marriage with that Nepal king Harsha must have invaded these countries after the raid of the aspiring Yośovarman of Kanauj and the march of Lalitāditya of Kashmir over the eastern Indian countries. But it cannot be ascertained whether these conquered countries ever formed any part of the dominion of Harsha, king of Kāmarūpa. The matrimonial relation with the royal family of Nepal indicates that he had much political influence in North-Eastern India. We have also seen before that the mother of this son-in-law of Harsha was the daughter of the Maukhari king, Bhogavarman, who had himself married the daughter of Ādityasena of Magadha. Within, therefore, a period of four generations we observed matrimonial relationship obtaining amongst four royal dynasties in North-Eastern India, viz, the Magadha, the Maukhari, the Nepal and the Kāmarūpa houses. We shall have to close this chapter on the Kāmarūpa kingdom at this point to keep within the limits prescribed for our discourse.

Chapter XI

The Kingdom of Nepal

The present kingdom of Nepal is a vast mountainous country with valleys strewn here and there and is a State administered independently by a king belonging to an indigenous Gurkha dynasty, ruling through the prime minister, who also exercises a large share of sovereign power. The kingdom, however, is very old and has passed through may a vicissitude, having been ruled at different periods of her history by kings of various dynasties, sometime independently and sometime as *sāmantas* or feudatory chiefs. In ancient times the province was confined within the limits of the valley or valleys near about Kāṭmāṇḍu, the capital. That the name *Nepāla* is an old one can be attested by a reference to the adjective *Naipālikaṁ*, meaning 'belonging to Nepāla', used in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*[1] and applied to a special kind of blankets made of sheep's wool *(āvikaṁ)*.

The late Dr. Vincent Smith,[2] believing in the tradition that Nepal formed an integral part of the Mauryyan empire under King Aśoka, thought that as it was not very far from Pāṭaliputra, it was probably administered directly from the Magadhan capital. But the first undoubted historical reference to the

1 *Vide* Gaṇapati Śāstrin's edition—Book II, chap. XI, p. 193.

2 *Early History of India*—3rd edition, pp. 365-366.

Nepal valley is found in Samudragupta's famous Allahabad Pillar inscription[3] of the fourth century A. D., whence it is learnt that, like Kāmarūpa and other eastern *pratyanta* countries, Nepāla also was brought under the allegiance of the Gupta emperor, and forced to remain subject to his lord-paramountcy by payment of tribute. According to our calculation the first king of the Lichchhavi family of the Nepal branch, Jayadeva I, ruled in the first century A. D. From the fact that the inscriptions of Nepal do not record the names of kings for many generations, specially for a period of about two centuries and a half, roughly from 378 to 610 A. D., it seems quite probable that they must have ruled there as vassals under the imperial Gupta emperors, and probably other later Indian provincial rulers, such as the Maukharis, the Later Guptas of Magadha etc, or under the foreign Tibetan kings, in different periods of its history. But it is known that during the first part of the. 7th century A. D. this country was ruled, often simultaneously in two different portions of the country, by kings belonging to the Lichchhavi family and the Ṭhākurī dynasty and continued to be so ruled upto about the middle of that century. We are not in a position, however, to establish the exact connection between the Nepal and the old Vaiśālī branches of the Lichchhavis. Yuan Chwang[4] in the seventh century remarked that the Nepalese Lichchhavis were eminent scholars, believed in Buddhism and ranked themselves as Kshatriyas.

3 Fleet—*C. I I.* Vol. III, No. 1, l. 22.

4 *Vide* Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II. p. 84.

The early history of Nepal can be known only from two sources, viz the Nepal *Vaṁṣāvalīs* and the stone inscriptions. Both these sources have been very fully discussed in a most able manner by antiquarians,—first by Bhagwanlal Indraji[5] with the help of Dr. Bühler, afterwards by the late Dr. Fleet[6] and finally by M. Sylvain Le'vi[7] in his most admirable and comprehensive treatise entitled *Le Ne'pal*. It seems that a most fundamental difference yet remains between the two former scholars Indraji and Fleet), regarding the interpretation of the eras, to which the dates of the important inscriptional documents of Nepal are to be referred. We, however, reserve till, a later stage of this chapter the discussion of the chronology of the early Nepal rulers.

In order to understand clearly the chronology of the early Nepal kings, adjusted by us in this chapter, and to enable scholars to discuss the historical materials obtained from Bhagwanlal Indraji's Inscriptions[8] Nos. 1-15, Bendall's Inscriptions[9] Nos. I-IV, and some of M. Sylvain Le'vi's collections,[10] we propose to give below their contents arranged chronologically, with a short note on the place of their discovery, for convenience of reference. We

5 *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIII (1884), p. 411 ff.

6 Fleet. *C. I. I.*, Vol. III, Introduction (Appendix IV) p. 117 ff.

7 Sylvain Le'vi—*Le Ne'pal*, Vols. I-II, 1905, and Vol. III, 1908.

8 *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX (1880), p. 163 ff.

9 *Ibid*, Vol. XIV (1885), p. 98 (Text of No. I) and Bendall's *Journey in Nepal*, p. 72 ff. Plate VIII, p. 74 f. Plate IX, p. 77 ff. Plate X, and p. 76, Plate XI.

10 *Le Ne'pal*, t 3, Nos. I-XX.

need make no apology for treating below these inscriptions in detail, for they have long been neglected by Indian scholars, although it will be plain that there is distinct cultural affinity between the Nepal people and the Indians from a remote past. M. Sylvain Levi's book is in French. It is generally felt by Indian scholars that a detailed chapter on the early history of Nepal, written in English, is a desideratum.

Indraji No. 1. *An Inscription of the Lichchhavi King Mānadeva, dated [Vikrama-] saṁvat 386 (=329 A.D.).*

[Treated as fragmentary, because the buried lower portion of the stone could not be laid bare by the Pandit. Incised in Northern Indian characters on the lower part of a broken pillar, placed near the door of the temple of Chāṅgu-Nārāyaṇa (old image of Vishṇu riding on Garuḍa) situated about 5 miles N-E of Kāṭmāṇḍu, and crowned by a lotus capital surmounted by a Garuḍa. The characters used closely resemble those of the early Gupta inscriptions. Language used in it is Sanskrit (prose and verse)].

Verse 1 describes the great Hari with his chest marked by the Śrīvatsa sign as residing in Dolādri (the name of the hill on which the temple stands). In verse 2 is mentioned King Vṛshadeva who was surrounded by sons who were learned, proud, constant, famous and self-disciplined. His son (v. 3) was King Śaṅkaradeva, who was unconquerable in battles by enemies, and who enjoyed a prosperous kingdom, and protected

the earth through the help of approved officials *(abhimata-bhṛtyaiḥ)*. The next virtuous king, Dharmadeva (v. 4), ruled the vast hereditary kingdom with justice. Verses 5 and 6 lie buried in the portion of the pillar underground, and they probably referred to some events in the life of that king and his character. We know from verse 7 that his faithful wife was Rājyavatī, who gave birth to King Mānadeva of unblamable character. Verses 8-11 tell in a most pathetic way of the queen's announcement[11] to his son of the death of his father, the king, and her firm desire to follow her husband as she felt life miserable without her lord, and they also refer to her appointment of Mānadeva to reign in his father's place. One of these verses (v. 10) mentions the determination, out of filial devotion, of the prince to give up his own life, before his mother gave up her own ; so the son succeeded in dissuading his queen-mother from self-immolation, and then both the mother and the son together performed the last rites of the deceased king. Verse 12 also lies buried underground. Verse 13 states the personal qualifications of Mānadeva. It is learnt from verses 14 and 15 that the king sought and obtained his mother's consent to his proposal to repay his debt to his late father, not by austerities, but by "true and rightly performed feats of arms" *(yathāvad=astra-vidhinā)*, as he was well aware of his father's military success and erection of high pillars of victory on earth.

[11] *Cf.* the fourth quarter of v. 8 running thus:—"राज्यं पुत्रक कारयाहमनुयाम्यद्यैव भर्तुर्गतिम्".

Intending, therefore, to become "initiated in the rites of the battle-sacrifice offered by Kshatriyas", Mānadeva led an expedition[12] to the east to crush his enemies, declaring that he would instal on their thrones those princes who would remain obedient to him. In this expedition he reduced to obedience some of the rebellious *sāmantas* of the east and then marched back to the west where also he was informed of the misdeeds of a feudal chief[13] whom he challenged to submit, on pain of being forced to submission by his valour.

Sylvain Lévi II—*The Inscription of Lajanpat, dated [Vikrama-] saṁvat 387 (=330 A.D.).*

This inscription records the installation of the image of a Vishṇu (in his dwarf incarnation, *vikrānta-mūrttiṁ*) by *rājā* Mānadeva for the increase of the religious merit of his mother, Rājyadevī, in the month of Vaiśākha (in the bright fortnight) of the *saṁvat* 387.

12 *Cf.* v 14 :—

"यूपैश्चारुभिरुच्छ्रितैर्व्वसुमती पित्रा ममालङ्कृता
नात्र क्षाजिमखाश्रयेण विधिना दीक्षाश्रितोहं स्थितः [।]
यात्राम्प्रत्यरिसङ्क्षयाय तरसा गच्छामि पूर्व्वान्दिशम्
ये चाज्ञावशवर्त्तिनो मम नृपाः संस्थापयिष्यामि तान्" [॥१४॥]

13 *Cf.* the third quarter of v. 17. :—

"आहूतो यदि नैति विक्रमवशादेष्य(ष्य)त्यसौ मे वशं"

Sylvain Le´vi III—*The Inscription of To-bahal (Kāṭmāṇḍu), dated [Vikrama-] saṁvat 402 (=345 A.D.).*

This inscription records the installation of a sun-god by the name of Indıa and the allotment of some field and land to the god, by the chief of a corporation of merchants, named Guhamitra, on the fifteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āshāḍha of the *saṁvat* 402.

Indraji No. 2. *An Inscription of a person named Jayavarman in the reignof Mānadeva, [Vikrama-] saṁvat 413(=356 A.D.).*

[Incised on a stone forming the base of a *liṅga*, placed opposite the northern door of the famous temple of Paśupati, 3 miles N-E of Kāṭmāṇḍu. Characters belong to the early Gupta period. Language Sanskrit].

This epigraph records the erection ,of a *liṅga* of the name of Jayeśvara by a person named Jayavarman for the welfare of the people and their king, and mentions a permanent endowment (*akshayanīvī*) for defraying expenses of *kāraṇa-pūjā* (worship on festive days and other occasions). This he does, as he says, by favour of King Mānadeva.

Indraji No. 3. *An Inscription of King Vasantadeva, dated [Vikrma-] saṁvat 435 (=378 A.D.).*

[Incised on a slab of stone with a semi-circular top, adorned by a relievo showing a *chakra* and two

śaṅkhas, not far from the temple of Jaist Lagantol Kāṭmāṇḍu. It is therefore a Vaishṇava epigraph. Fragmentary. Letters agree closely with forms of the early Gupta period. Language Sanskrit].

The famous king, *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja* Vasantadeva, who meditates on the lordly feet of the *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*, the *parama-daivata* Bappa (a term probably meaning the father i. e. 'le successeur re´gulier de son pere', as M. Sylvain Le´vi takes it, and not a general title used by chief priests as thought by Indraji), issued command from Mānagṛha[14] (the name of the capital or the royal residence, undoubtedly named after King Mānadeva) for a grant to somebody (not known by name owing to the destruction, in parts, of the inscription on the stone). The *dūtaka* (messenger) of the grant was the *sarvadaṇḍanāyaka*[15] *mahāpratihāra* (the chief administrator of criminal justice and the chief of the guards, lit. doorkeepers) Ravigupta. The name Mahīśīla appears to be that of the local official head who transacted administrative business (*vyavaharati*) and had jurisdiction over the place of the grant.

14 Mānagṛha—"la maison de Māna". (*Le Ne´pal*, t. 2.p. 106). M. Sylvain Le´vi in the same page refers also to the words *Śrī-Māna-vihāra*, mentioned in one inscription of Amśuvarman, as alluding to 'le convent de Māna', *Māneśvara*, a *liṅga* installed probably by King Māna and the word *Śrī-Mānāṅka* (written in Gupta characters on coins), meaning 'a la marque de Māna'.

15 With due deference to Prof. Sylvain Le´vi, we differ from the meaning he attaches to this word, viz "commandant en chef (*vide Le Ne´pal*, t 1, p. 281). In that case the right meaning he gives to the officer, *mahābalādhyaksha viz* "inspeteur des arme´es" loses its force, as being tautological.

Sylvain Le´vi VI—*The Inscription of Kisipidi, dated [Vikrama-] saṁvat 449 (=392 A.D.).*

This is a fragmentary inscription recording a grant in which reference is made to the payment of the customary taxes (probably to the grantees). The *dūtaka* was the *sarvadaṇḍanāyaka-mahāpratihāra* Ravigupta. It was issued on the first bright *daśamī* day of the month of Āshāḍha *(prathamāshā [ḍh]a-śukla-daśamyāṁ)* in the *saṁvat* 449. In all probability the epigraph belonged to the reign of Vasantadeva or his immediate successor. M. Sylvain Le´vi, however, takes the date to correspond with 559-60 A.D.

Sylvain Le´vi VIII—*The Kisipidi Inscription of Gaṇadeva,* dated [Vikrama-] saṁvat 400......... (?)

It records an address issued by a king named Gaṇadeva, who is described as using the epithets, *bappapādānuddhyāta* and *mahārāja*, from the residence called Mānagṛha, to the house-holders of the village of Kichaprichiṁ regarding a grant. The *dūtaka* seems to have been one Prasādagupta. It is, however, not clear from the text of this broken record if the latter exercised the function of a *sarvvadaṇḍanāyaka* and *mahāpratihāra* (1. 7.) under King Gaṇadeva, just as Ravigupta did under Vasantadeva. The date of the address appears to be a year which is later than *saṁvat* 400 as the symbols for the tens and units are broken away and lost. The day was the bright *pratipada* of the month of Śrāvaṇa.

Sylvain Le'vi VIII—*The Inscription of Tsapaligaon, dated [Vikrama-] samvat 489 (=432 A.D.).*

This is also a broken record about a grant by a *Bhaṭṭārakamahārāja* (whose name appears missing), issued from the Mānagṛha palace on the 12th day of the bright fort-night in the month of Śrāvaṇa in the *saṁvat* 489. The *dūtaka* in this grant is named Vṛshavarmman styled *Bhaṭṭārakapādīya* i.e. an officer belonging (probably) to the personal staff of the king himself.

Indraji No. 4. *An Inscription dated [Gupta-] saṁvat 335 (=654-55 A D.).*

[Be it noted first that the date of this inscription is not 535 as read by Bhagwanlal Indraji, the symbol for 300 being clear and correct. Incised on a stone-slab, Lagantol, Kāṭmāṇḍu. Characters belong to Northern type of script used in the 7th century A.D. Language Sanskrit. Most of the parts illegible owing to letters being effaced].

It records a grant of a piece of land. The king's name is not found in the legible portions. Only the portions containing the text about the king's warning to the future interferers with the donees is preserved. The *dūtaka* was the Rājaputra Vikramasena. In our opinion this epigraph probably belonged to the time of either Śivadeva or his son Dhruvadeva.

Indraji No. 5. *A broken Inscription of Śivadeva I (date broken away and lost).*

[Inscised on a stone-slab near Budda Nilkaṇṭha tank, 5 miles north of Kāṭmāṇḍu. Characters closely resemble those of the preceding inscription dated 335 *saṁvat* = 654-55 A.D.].

It records an address issued by *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja* Śivadeva (I), the banner of the Lichchhavi family (*Lichchhavi-kula-ketu*) from the Mānagṛha residence to the inhabitants of a locality (name being lost), certainly about some grant made by the king for their welfare, at the instance of the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman, who is herein described[16] as "one who has destroyed the power of all enemies by his heroic majesty, obtained by victories in numerous great wars and whose brilliant fame, gained by the trouble he took in properly protecting the subjects, pervades the circle of the quarters".

Sylvain Le'vi IX—*The Inscription of Tulacchi-Tol, Bhatgaon, of the time of Śivadeva I, dated [Gupta-] saṁvat 310 (?) (=629-30 A.D.).*

The form of the address in this record resembles that in the preceding epigraph and the following ones of the same king Śivadeva I. The king who is styled here *bappa-pādānuddhyāta*, *Lichchavikulaketu* and *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja* issues the address from the Mānagṛha residence to the householders of the village

16 *Cf.* the epithets :—"अनेक-पृथु-समर-सम्पात-विजयाधिगत-शौर्य्य-प्रतापापहत-सकल-शत्रु-पक्ष-प्रतापेन", and "सम्यक्-प्रजा-पालन-परिश्रमोपार्जित-शुभ्रयशोभिव्यास-दिङ्मण्डलेन"

named Khṛpuṅgrāma and their chiefs, stating that on the advice of the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman, of great fame, the destroyer of enemies, he issued the command of this grant, in which he inserts certain conditions for the entrance of Government officers into the granted land. It appears that Bhogavarmma-gomin was the *dūtaka*. The *saṁvat* number, read 500. 10 .. by the French savant, cannot be verified from the plate attached to his work, on account of effacement in many parts. We, however, think that it was a date in *saṁvat*, numbering 310 (?) and not 510 (?), and it refers to the Gupta era.

Bendall No. I—*An Inscription of Śiva-deva I, [Gupta-] saṁvat 3?8 (=637-38 A. D.).*

[Bendall[17] read and published this epigraph with the help of Bhagwanlal Indraji, but he hurriedly did so, as he himself acknowledges, because he was then preparing to leave India. Fleet[18] wrongly took the date to be 316.]

It records an address (almost similar in form to the one embodied in No. 5) issued to the house-holders of a village led by their heads (*pradhāna-jana-purassarān*), from the Mānagṛiha residence, about a royal favour regarding the right of entry there of Government officers, by *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja* Śivadeva, the banner of the *Lichchhavikula*, on the advice of the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman, who quelled the unmeasured strength of the enemies by his own great and

[17] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIV, p. 97 f, and Bendall's *Journey in Nepal*, p. 72 ff, Plate VIII.

[18] Fleet—*C.I.I.* Vol. III, Introduction, p. 178.

unsullied prowess (in wars). The *dūtaka* was Bhogavarman. It is quite probable that this Bhogavarman was the same person as the sister's son of Aṁśuvarman, who belonged to the Maukhari dynasty and later became the father-in-law of the Lichchhavi King Śivadeva (II).

Sylvain Le'vi X—*The Inscription of Thoka, dated [Gupta-] saṁvat 319 (=638-39 A. D.).*

This is a fragmentary inscription, which preserves only the information that in the grant recorded, one Vipravarmma-gomin acted as the *dūtaka)* and the charter was issued on the tenth day of a bright fortnight of a month (name lost) in *saṁvat* 519, as read by the French scholar. For want of a plate we cannot ascertain if the date was not 319 *saṁvat*, which is to be referred to the Gupta era, and which, therefore, will correspond to 638-39 A. D.

Sylvain Le'vi XI—*The Inscription of Dharampur, dated [Gupta-] saṁvat 320 (=639-40 A. D.).*

This is a *samājñāpanā* form of address found in fragments, from the preserved portion of which it is only learnt that the king (Śivadeva) directed the householders of the village in which the land-grant was made, to respect the two-fold privilege granted to it and he also declares that his successors, *dharmmagurus* (' teachers of justice ') as they are, should continue to maintain the donation made by

their predecessors. The *dūtaka* in this charter was *Vārtta* Bhogachandra, and it was issued on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha in the *saṁvat* 320. It may be noted here that the *saṁvat* number is not 520, as read by M. Sylvain Le´vi. The symbol for 300 is clear to view even on the plate. It is to be referred, in our opinion, to the Gupta era.

Sylvain Le´vi XII—*The Khopasi Inscription of Śivadeva I, dated [Gupta-] saṁvat 320 (=639-40 A. D.).*

It is a *samājñāpanā* form of address, issued from the Mānagṛha residence, to the householders and the *pradhānas* of the village of Kurppāsī, by *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*, Śivadeva I (herein described as *Lichchhavi-kulānandakara).* The king states that with his approval the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman, who, it is mentioned,[10] " removed the darkness of ignorance by means of the light of the rays of the gems in the shape of his own virtues ", " obtained prospects of welfare by his devotional obeisance to the lotus-feet of Lord Bhava ", and " uprooted the multitude of all enemies by means of the strength of the pair of his own arms ", granted to these villagers the privilege that in all affairs they shall not have to go to the *adhikaraṇas*, departments (of justice). These affairs shall be submitted to the local proprietor (*svatalasvāmin*)

10 *Cf.* the epithets—" *svaguṇa-maṇi-mayūkh=āloka [dhva] st=ājñānatimireṇa, bhagavad-Bhava-pāda-paṅkaja-praṇām=ānush-ṭhāna-tātparyy=opātt=āyati-hita śreyasā, svabhuja-yuga-bal=otkhāt=ā[khi]la-vairi varggeṇa*". *Le Ne´pal*, t 3, p. 79.

for settlement, and that they shall have the right of use of only one gate. There is also a direction that on the two occasions viz *Dvārodghāṭana* and *Kailāsakūṭa-yātrā*, each villager should give fifty pieces of *jāti-śukla-mṛttikā* (genuine silver coins or lumps ?). Then occur the usual warning to the interferers and direction to the future kings for preserving these privileges granted to the village. The *dūtaka* was one Deśavarmma-gomin, and the charter was executed on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Chaitra in the *saṁvat* 320. It may be noted here that as in the preceding inscription the symbol for the *saṁvat* is not 520 as read by M. Sylvain Lévi.

Sylvain Lévi XIII—*The Harigaon Inscription (I) of Aṁśuvarman, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 30 (=636 A.D.).*

This inscription forms a record of the *svayam=ājñā* type (i.e. the ruler's own voluntary order) issued from the Kailāsakūṭabhavana palace by the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman (using the usual epithets, *Bhagavat-Paśupatibhaṭṭāraka-pādānudhyāta* and *Bappapādaparigṛhīta*). It is a direction to the donees and the State-officers appointed to collect the dues of the people according to the limits prescribed (*maryādā-paṇa-grahaṇ=ādhikṛta*). It contains a list[20] of dona-

[20] *Vide* the following passage of M. Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal*, t. 3, p. 83:—"Aṁouvarman, en qualité de *mahā-sāmanta*, institue un assez grand nombre de donations (prasāda) affectées a des bénéficiaires de genres divers: divinités, temples, fonctionaires, animaux, portes, rues".

tions *(prasāda)* to beneficiaries of various kinds. The value of each donation in *purāṇa* and *paṇa* coins is mentioned in the epigraph. The date of the charter is the sixth day of a bright fortnight of the *saṁvat* 30.

Sylvain Le´vi XIV—*The Harigaon Inscription (II) of Aṁśuvarman, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 32 (=638 A.D.).*

This inscription is also of the same *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman (described with his usual titles as in the preceding record). It is an address issued by him from the Kailasakūṭabhavana to the householders, cultivators and other heads of families regarding a number of donations (with values stated in individual cases in *purāṇa* and *paṇa* coins) to temples, establishments and persons, belonging to different religious sects, Śaivism, Vaishṇavism, Buddhism etc. then prevailing in Nepal. It is a record of allotments *(maryādā-bandha)*. It contains the important information that the donor possessed a "pure heart which was engaged in works conducive to the welfare of his people" *(praja-hit=ārth=odyata-śuddha-chetasā)*. His only concern was how his people would feel happy (*kathaṁ prajā me sukhitā bhavet*). Its date is the 13th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āshāḍha in *saṁvat* 32. For a study of the history of religious movements in Nepal such inscriptions are very valuable.

Sylvain Levi XV—*The Sanga Inscription of Aṁśuvarman, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 32 (=638 A.D.).*

This is also an inscription belonging to the reign of Aṁśuvarman. All the epithets usually mentioned along with his name occur here also. It is an address issued from the Kailāsakūṭabhavana by the *mahāsāmanta* (described in this record as *kshitilala-tilakabhūta* and *kutuhali-janat=ānimesha-nayan=āvalokyamāna* i.e. "at which the winkless eyes of curious people are always cast") to the *pradhānas* and other heads of families in the village Śaṅgāgrāma regarding certain kind of remission on the question of some contribution of oil by the village-people. (cf. the line :—*nātaḥ parenaitad vastu-tailaṁ kasyacid deyaṁ*). The bestowal of this privilege by the *mahāsāmanta* was recorded in this charter of the *svayam=ājñā* type (direct order). In this inscription also we find Aṁśuvarman described as one always busy in bringing about the welfare of the people (*prajā-hita-samādhāna-tatpara*). The *dūtaka* was *sarvadaṇḍanāyaka Rājaputra* Vikramasena. The latter is also the *dūtaka* in inscription No. 5 above. Its date is the first day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra in *saṁvat* 32.

No. 6. *An Inscription of Aṁśuvarman, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 34 (=640 A.D.).*

[Incised on a stone-slab near a village called Bungmati, 4 miles south of Kāṭmāṇḍu, the top of which shows a sculpture of the Buddhist symbol of the wheel of Law between two deer. This stone, it may be noted, is taken out every 12 years on the occasion of the Rathayātrā festival of Avalokiteśvara,

whose temple is situated in the centre of the village. Characters resemble those in the last few inscriptions. Language Sanskrit.]

It forms a record of an order, issued from the Kailāsakūṭabhavana residence by the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman, favoured by the feet of Paśupati Bhaṭṭāraka and meditating the feet of his Bappa (father), to the inhabitants of a certain village. The epigraph is concerned with the preservation of cocks, pigs, fishes etc. The *dūtaka* is *mahāsarva* [*daṇḍa-nā*]. *yaka* Vikra [masena]. The restoration of both the name and the title appears to have been rightly contemplated by Bhagwanlal Indraji. In our opinion (as against that[21] of Fleet), this Vikramasena may be identical with the Rājaputra of the same name in No. 4. This inscription and that one (No. 4) seem to be almost contemporary records.

Bendall No. II—*An Inscription* [*of Aṁśuvarman*], *dated* [*Harsha-*] *saṁvat 34 (=640 A.D.)*.

This is a charter[22] issued from Kailāsakuṭabhavana by the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvasman (name restored), recording the grant of two fields for the purpose of making provision of repairs of some building. The *dūtaka* is the *Mahābalādhyaksha* Vindusvāmin.

Indraji No. 7. *An Inscription of Aṁśuvarman, dated* [*Harsha-*] *saṁvat 39 (=645 A.D.)*.

21 Fleet—*C. I. I.* Vol. III, Introduction p. 178 f, fn. 2.

22 Bendall—*Journey in Nepal*, p. 74 f, Plate IX.

[Incised on a stone-slab near a temple of Gaṇeśa, not far from the Paśupati temple. Characters same as in the few preceding inscriptions. Language Sanskrit.]

This inscription, like the preceding ones, is one of the peculiar records embodying the *samājñāpanā* of the king of Nepal regarding instructions on some dedications. The order in this record was issued from the Kailāsakūṭabhavana residence by *Bhagavat-Paśupati-Bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānudhyāta* Śrī-Aṁśuvarman, herein described as one who, on account of the destruction of "his false opinion (on religion) by pondering day and night over the meaning of various *śāstras*, considers the arrangement of preservation of religious and charitable institutions his greatest pleasure." This king commands by this charter the non-interference (*apraveśa*) of the officials of the Western Court (*Paśchimādikaraṇa-vṛtti-bhujaḥ*) in the work of the members of the *Adhaḥśālā-pañchālikās* (committees for the administration of temples and their endowments) under whose protection were placed the three *liṅga* forms of Śiva installed by the king's relatives as stated below. The *liṅga* named Śūra-bhogeśvara was installed by his own sister, Bhogadevī, mother of Bhogavarman and wife of Rājaputra Śūrasena, for the increase of merit of her husband. The second *liṅga* called Laḍita-maheśvara was installed by her daughter, the king's niece, Bhāgyadevī by name, and the third *liṅga* named Dakshiṇeśvara by her (i.e. the latter's) elder brothers [or her ancestors ?] (*etat-pūrvvajaiḥ*). The *dūtaka* was the *Yuvarāja* named

Udayadeva (probably the heir-apparent of Aṁśuvarman's suzerain viz. the Lichchhavi king, Dhruvadeva). To us it seems that this *Yuvarāja* Udayadeva was of young age in 645 A.D. and belonged undoubtedly to the Lichchhavi dynasty and not to the Ṭhākurī family as taken by Fleet.[23]

Indraji No. 8. *An Inscription of Vibhuvarman, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 45 (?) (=651 A.D.).*

[Incised on the side of the mouth of a water-course on the road from Kāṭmāṇḍu to the Residency. Characters resemble those of the last few inscriptions. The second figure (5) of the date seems of doubtful reading. Language Sanskrit].

It is not a formal charter like the preceding ones, but records only the meritorious work of building a good conduit *(praṇālī)* by one *vārtta* (an officer enjoying pay from the king's treasury) named Vibhuvarman, by favour of Aṁśuvarman. The word *vārtta* may also refer to an officer of the department of agriculture (*vārttā*). M. Sylvain Lévi[24] thinks that this officer had probably to exercise "les fonctions de fermiers généraux."

Indraji No. 9. *An Inscription of Jishṇugupta, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 48 (=654 A.D.).*

[23] *Op Cit.* p 180, fn. 3 and Table, p. 189.

[24] *Le Népal*—t. 1, p. 282.

[Incised on a stone-slab near the temple of Chhinnamastikā Devī in Lalitapattana (situated one-and-a-half miles east of Kāṭmāṇḍu). Charaters resemble closely, with slight changes, here and there, those of Aṁśuvarman's time. Language Sanskrit prose, with slight poetry in lines 2 and 3.].

It is the promulgation of a stone-slab edict (*śilā-paṭṭaka-śāsanaṁ* as described in the inscription itself) issued from Kailāsakūṭabhavana by Jishṇugupta, who was *Paśupati-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānudhyāta*, addressing the householders of some villages for whose benefit a *tilamaka*[25] (water-course) was formerly led by orders of *Bhaṭṭāraka mahārājādhirāja* Aṁśuvarman, but which was destroyed for want of repairs. Jishṇugupta made over this repair-work to a *sāmanta*, named Chandravarman. The second favour done by Jishṇugupta to these villagers was the presentation of a few irrigable fields (*vāṭikā*). Out of the collective income (*piṇḍaṁ*) from these fields the future repair-work of the water-course was to be done. None would be permitted to lead this water-course elsewhere. The *dūtaka* was *Yuvarāja* Vishṇugupta. There is an important reference to the name of the illustrious lord and great king (*Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*) Śrī-Dhruvadeva in the first two damaged lines of the inscription, where Fleet finds the two letters *Māna* visible. In all probability these

25 Bhagwanlal Indraji regards this un-Sanskrit word to mean some kind of water-course. He writes—"Probably it denotes a channel which leads the water from the hill-side over the fields which rise in terraces one above the other". *Vide I. A.* Vol. IX, p. 172, fn. 30.

two letters formed the first component of the compound-word *Mānagṛha* which, as we think, continued to remain the royal residence of the Lichchhavi rulers, one of whom was this Dhruvadeva, whose lord-paramountcy was acknowledged by Jishṇugupta. In this epigraph Jishṇugupta is described as " desirous of the welfare of his subjects, and one of pure conduct, whose orders were obeyed by all citizens and whose kingly prosperity has been got from a pure lineage" (*samasta-pau* [*rāśri*] *ta-śāsanaḥ*, and *puṇy=ānvayād=āgata-rājya-sampat*). These epithets as applied to him seem to be very important in this way that Jishṇugupta probably had no lineal connection with Aṁśuvarman but succeeded to his rank at Kailāsakūṭabhavana whereform he ruled all the people of the city. Kailāskūṭabhavana now began to rise into greater prominence, Mānagṛha gradually losing its former glory and importance and becoming non-existent within the next few years.

Indraji No. 10. *An undated (mutilated) Inscription of Jishṇugupta (belonging to Dhruvadeva's reign).*

[Incised on a black stone-slab near a temple of Vishṇu, called Mīna-Nārāyaṇa, near southern gate of Kāṭmāṇḍu. Characters same as in the preceding inscription. Language Sanskrit.]

This record is an edict of *Bhagavat-Paśupati-Bhaṭṭā-rakapādānugṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānudhyāta* Jishṇugupta, issued from Kailāsakūṭabhavana probably to the Pañchālikā named Gīṭā-pañchālikā of the village of

Dakshiṇakolī. In the introductory portion of the edict Jishṇugupta is described as having acknowledged *Bhaṭṭāraka-rāja* Dhruvadeva, the banner of the Lichchhavi-kula, as his lord-paramount and engaged his mind in devising the means of freeing from calamity all the people headed by Dhruvadeva himself. The contents then refer to the leading of a *tilamaka* (water-course) by a former chief, a *mahāsāmanta* (undoubtedly Aṁśuvarman, his name ending in *deva*, cf. No. 9) who attained good prospects by his knowledge of all political expedients etc. and who succeeded personally in quelling powerful enemies (*balavataḥ śatrūn=babhañja svayaṁ*), but who, having once commenced the digging of the water-course for the benefit of the people, could not probably finish the work. Hence the villagers were directed by this edict to complete the work (*upsaṁhartavya*) by paying one-tenth of their *piṇḍaka* revenue (*piṇḍaka-daśabhāgam-pratyākalayya*). The edict further gives instructions to them for the worship of the deity (whose name appears to end in .... *leśvara-svāmin*) and the timely repair of the *tilamaka*, and then it ends in warning his own officers never to interfere in this holy right (*puṇyādhikāra*) and settlement (*vyāvasthā*).

Indraji No. 11. *An undated (mutilated) Inscription of Jishṇugupta's reign.*

[Incised on a stone which supports a parasol over an image of Chaṇḍeśvara in the great temple of Paśupati. Characters same as in the preceding inscription. Language Sanskrit].

This inscription forms a record of certain grants of land to the Pāśupata congregation called *Muṇḍa-śṛṅkhalika-Pāśupatāchāryya-parshad* made by one Āchāryya-Bhagavat Pranarddana-Prāṇakauśika, for the provision of repair-work in the temple of Chhatra-Chaṇḍeśvara and a conduit in a village, during the augmenting victorious reign (*pravardhamāna-vijayarājye*) of Jishṇugupta.

Sylvain Lévi XVI—*The Thankot Inscription of Jishṇugupta, dated saṁvat 500 (?).*

This is an address issued from the Kailāsakūṭa-bhavana palace by Jishṇguptadeva (described with the usual epithets of *Bhagavat-Paśupatibhaṭṭāraka-pādānu-gṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānuddhyāta*) styled "the ornament of the Soma lineage" (*Somānvayabhūshaṇa*) to the heads of families residing in the village of Kāchaṇṇasta on the decision of certain partial remission of the people's dues. A *śilāpaṭṭa-śāsana* to this effect was ordered so that it may long endure (*dūratarakāla-sthitaye*). There is a reference to a pond excavated by the great-grand-father of Jishṇugupta, who is named Mānagupta-gomin. The *dūtaka* here was *Yuvarāja* Vishṇugupta. The date in *saṃvat* read as 500 (?) is very doubtful. The most peculiar reference in this record is the mention of *Bhaṭṭāraka* Mānadeva (in ll. 5-6) who is described as "the banner of the family occupying the throne" at (?) Mānagṛha [*Mānagṛhāt siṅghā(ṁhā)san=ādhyāsi-kulaketu-bhaṭṭāraka Śrī-Mānadevas=tatpurassaraḥ*]. It seems quite reasonable to think that when Jishṇugupta was

ruling from Kailāsakūṭabhavana there was a prince named Mānadeva (probably of the Lichchhavi dynasty) who was only occupying the old palace at Mānagṛha. He does not seem to have been a ruling sovereign, just as Dhruvadeva was.

Sylvain Le'vi XVIII—*The Chasal-tol Inscription of Jayadeva II (?), dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 137 (=743 A. D.).*

This is an address of the *svayam=ājñā* type (probably) issued by King Jayadeva II containing reference to certain donations (*prasāda*). It is a fragmentary inscription in which the names of several *goshṭhīs* occur in the portions referring to the boundaries of the grants. The *dūtaka* is *Bhaṭṭāraka* Vijayadeva (*Cf.* Indraji No. 14). The date of the inscription is dated the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyaishṭha in the *saṁvat* 137.

Sylvain Le'vi XIX—*The Timi Inscription of Śivadeva II (?), (date in year lost).*

This is a fragmentary inscription which contains a donation *(prasāda)* arranged, in all probability, by Śivadeva II. As in the other inscription (Indraji No. 12, dated *saṁvat* 119 i.e. 725 A.D.) of this king, there is reference to *vishṭimanushya-sambandha* ("rapport aux hommes de la corvee") and to *rājakulīya-vyavasāyins.* This is also a direct order (*svayam=ājñā*) of the king. The *dūtaka* is Rājaputra Jayadeva. The date is the 6th day of the dark fortnight of the month Āśvina, in the *saṁvat* [?] (number missing).

Sylvain Lévi XX—*The Yag Bahal Inscription of Śivadeva II (date broken away and lost).*

This record is almost exactly similar in form to the inscription No. 13 (Indraji) of the same king, Śivadeva II. This epigraph was issued by *parama-Māheśvara-paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja* Śivadeva (using the other usual epithets, *Bhagavat-Paśupati-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta, Bappa-pādānudhyāta, Lichchhavikulaketu*) from the residence, named herein as Bhadrādhivāsabhavana (as also in No. 13). It is an address to the villages etc. of the village of Gulla-taṅgagrāma about the grant made to the fraternity of Buddhist monks coming from all directions and residing in the Śivadeva-vihāra. The special privileges of the donees are mentioned in detail. There is an allusion to Mānadeva-vihāra and other monasteries in it. The part of the name (the element Śiva) of the king is lost in the epigraph.

Bendall No. III.—*An Inscription (of Lichchhavi Narendradeva's or Vishṇugupta's reign ?), dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 82 (=c688 A.D.).*

This charter[26] was issued from Kailāsakūṭabhavana, probably during the reign of Narendradeva (whose name is lost in lines 2-7 of the inscription). It records the provision for the worship of the deity

[26] Bendall *Journey in Nepal*, p. 77 ff and plate X.

named Vajreśvara and some other religious purposes. Bhaṭṭāraka *Yuvarāja*, Skandadeva, acted as the *dūtaka* in this transaction.

Indraji No. 12. *An Inscription of Śiva-deva II dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 119 (=725 A.D.).*

[Incised on a black stone-slab now situated in a modern Vishṇu temple in Lagantol, Kāṭmāṇḍu. A carved relievo representing Nandin reclining on the Kailāsa adorns the top. Characters almost the same as those in the preceding and the following inscriptions].

This inscription records the permanent grant, according to *bhūmichchhidranyāya*, of a village (Vaidya-grāma) as an *agrahāra* made for the increase of religious merit of his parents and of himself by *Parama-bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja* Śivadeva, who was favoured by the feet of Lord Paśupati Bhaṭṭāraka and medidated on the feet of (his) Bappa (father), to the congregation of the Pāśupatas named Vasu-(vaṁśa) Pāśupatachāryyas for the sake of the deity, Śrī-Śivadeveśvara, dedicated by himself, for making provision of repair of his temple (*tad-devakula-khaṇḍa-sphuṭita-saṁskāra-karaṇāya* The king commands the headmen of the village and its householders to pay henceforward all kinds of taxes and other royal dues to this congregation whom they should obey in respect of all work they have to perform. The only condition regarding this grant is that this granted village shall have to discharge an annual obligation for a supply to the tradesmen (*vyavasāyins*, translated as "authorities"

by Bhagwanlal) of five porters (*bhārika-jana*) for the Bhoṭṭa[27] transport service (*Bhoṭṭavishṭi-hetoḥ*). The *dūtaka* in this transaction was *Rājāputrā* Jayadeva.

Indraji No. 13. *A mutilated Inscription of Śivadeva, dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 143 (?) (=749 A.D.).*

[Incised on a stone outside the southern gate of the enclosure of the temple of Paśupati. Characters agree closely with those used in the preceding inscriptions of the first half of the eighth century A.D. Language Sanskrit. The reading of the date (143 *saṁvat*) seemed doubtful even to Bhagwanlal. The second numerical symbol might also be read as 20 or 30.]

It records the grant of a village made by *Parama-māheśvara, Parama-bhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja* Śivadeva (the king's name being illegible in the lacuna in l. 3) to the fraternity of Buddhist monks residing in the Śivadeva-*vihāra* (monastery founded by Śiva-deva). The king directs that this grant should not be violated by his subjects who should obey this Ārya-saṅgha in respect of all matters relating to it. It is a voluntary command or direct order (*svayam=ājñā*) of the king and Bhaṭṭāraka Śivadeva was himself the *dūtaka*. The name of the place of issue of the charter is broken away and lost.

27 *Cf.* the passage in M Sylvain Le'vi's *Le Nepal*, t. 1, p. 283 where he writes :—"Enfin le village est tenu a la prestation annuelle de certaines corvees, par exemple, it doit fournirdes porteurs pour le transport au Tibet (Bhoṭṭa-viṣṭi)."

Indraji No. 14. *A mutilated Inscription of the time of Jayadeva II (?), dated [Harsha-] saṁvat 145 (=751 A.D.).*

[Incised on a stone near a water-conduit in the neighbourhood of the temple of Mañjughosha or Mīnanātha in Lalitapattana. Characters almost the same as those in the foregoing inscription].

The first part of this epigraph, recording the name of the place whence it was issued and that of the king who was the grantor, is broken away and lost. It was most probably a charter issued by Jayadeva II and we should regard the *dūtaka*, *Yuvarāja* Vijayadeva, as the former's son and not as a second son of Śivadeva II as thought by Fleet[28] who took the latter to have been the grantor; for, there can be but one *Yuvarāja* (heir-apparent) of a king. Nor do we feel inclined to endorse the view of Bhagwanlal[29] taking the *dūtaka* Vijayadeva, as a "vicarious" name of Jayadeva II, and the latter's father Śivadeva II, as the grantor.

It appears from the contents of the epigraph, gathered so far, that there occurred some disturbance amongst the people regarding the use of a *tilamaka* (water-course) which was probably the gift of a *kumārī* (princess ?), and the king, with the purpose of preventing such disturbance by bad people in future, promulgates this order that in future the disturbers should be dealt with in the *rājakula*.

28 *Op. Cit.*, Introduction, p. 183.

29 *Op. Cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 177.

The grantee was directed to see to the repair-work out of the income of the village. It was further ordered that the *tilamaka* should be used by the several *pañchālikās* after it had been divided into seven parts (*tilamakaś-cha saptadhā vibhajya pari-bhoktavyaḥ*).

Bendall IV—*An Inscription*[30] (*of the time of Jayadeva II ?*); *dated* [*Harsha-*] *saṁvat 151* (=*757 A. D.*).

This is not a formal charter of the usual type as in the preceding inscriptions, nor does it contain the name of any king. It is simply a record of a grant made to a Pañchaka or committee by a private individual in *saṁvat* 151.

Indraji No. 15. *An Inscription of Jaya-deva II, dated* [*Harsha-*] *saṁvat 153* (=*759 A. D.*).

Śiva is described as the highest Being in verse 1 and Rāvaṇa's and Bāṇāsura's worship of this god is referred to in the next verse. Verses 3-5 describe a few kings born of the sun-god (Sūrya), indicating that the kings of the Lichchhavi dynasty named in this inscription were Sūryavaṁśī kings. Manu, Ikshvāku, Vikukshi and Vishvagaśva, and (after an interval of a period for the rule of 28 kings not named in the inscription) Sagara, Asamañjasa,

30 Bendall—*Journey in Nepal*, p. 79 f and Plate XI.

Aṁśumat, Dilīpa and Bhagīratha and (then again after a gap for the rule of a few other kings whose exact number could not be known owing to the portion of the stone containing it being broken away and lost) Raghu, Aja and Daśaratha are mentioned. Then after an interval during which eight other rulers reigned in succession, was born in this family the illustrious Lichchhavi (*Śrīmān=ābhūl=Lichchhaviḥ*). The eulogist then points out in verse 6 that a new great and famous race bearing the pure name of Lichchhavi exists even now (i.e. at the time of the composition of this document). Some kings (the portion of the stone containing their number being broken away and lost) had passed away after Lichchhavi and then was born a king at Pushpapura (Pāṭaliputra) whose name was Supushpa.

Then after an interval covering the reigns of 23 kings, another famous king named Jayadeva I arose (v. 7). Eleven other kings' reign intervened and then was born the excellent king Vṛshadeva (v. 8) who was a follower of the Buddhist doctrine (*Sugata-śāsana-pakshapātī*). The next king was his son Śaṅkaradeva, after whom Dharmadeva succeeded to the throne. Then the latte's son Mānadeva became king. After this king reigned his son Mahīdeva (v. 9). The next verse (v. 10) describes Mahīdeva's son, King Vasantadeva, during whose reign wars with enemies came to a close (*śānt=āri-vigrahaḥ* and who was glorified by the vassal (*sāmanta*) chiefs subdued by him (*dānta-sāmanta-vanditaḥ*). We feel inclined to take the controversial reading of the next verse (v. 11) to mean that after King Vasantadeva

there was an interval during which eleven kings ruled and then came to the throne Udayadeva, the twelfth king, who had as his son King Narendradeva, the thirteenth in the list after Vasantadeva.

King Narendradeva is described as having his foot-stool covered with the dust from the row of diadems worn by numerous prostrated kings. The next two verses aıe significant for the important historical information they contain. From them we learn that to Narendradeva was born his son, the lord of the earth, named Śivadeva II, who was rich and charitable and "who conquered his foes, protected his peoplc, removed the distıess of the good, delighted his relatives and always spoke the truth" (v. 12). This king married (v. 13) the illustrious Vatsadevī,[31] who was the daughter of King Bhogavarman, the crest-jewel of the illustrious Varmans of the Maukhari dynasty, so rich in strength of arms and was the grand-daugher i.e. daughter's daughter of the great Ādityasena, King of Magadha. The next verse (v. 14) describes Jayadeva (II) as the son of King Śivadeva II born of his queen Vatsadevī and states that he was a king who could never be vanquished by his enemies (*ajayyaḥ paraiḥ*). Of his personal accomplishments and virtues, the court-poet describes him as liberal, self-respecting, far-seeing, polite, learned, helpful to

31 *Cf.* verse 13—"देवी बाहुबलाढ्य-मोखरिकुल-श्रीवर्म्मचूडामणि-
ख्यातिह्रेपित-वैरिभूपतिगण-श्रीभोगवर्म्मोद्भवा ।
दौहित्री मगधाधिपस्य महतः श्रादित्यसेनस्य या
व्यूढा श्रीरिव तेन सा क्षितिभुजा श्रीवत्सदेव्यादरात् ॥

the virtuous and strong. He married the princess Rājyamatī,[32] who was the daughter of King Harsha, the lord of Gauḍa, Uḍra and other countries and also of Kaliṅga and Kosala, who "crushed the heads of his hostile kings with the club-like tusks of his rutting elephants". Being spoken of as a noble descendant of Bhagadatta's royal line, Rājyamatī must have been a princess of the Kāmarūpa dynasty. The next verse (v. 16) is very important as it shows clearly the greatness[33] of Jayadeva II whose extensive

[32] *Cf.* verse 14—"माद्यद्दन्ति-समूह-दन्त-मुसल-क्षुण्णारि-भूभृच्छिरो-
गौडौड्रादिकलिङ्ग-कोसलपति-श्रीहर्षदेवात्मजा ।
देवी राज्यमती कुलोचितगुणैर्युक्ता प्रभूताकुलै-
र्येनोढा भगदत्त-राजकुलजा लक्ष्मीरिव क्ष्माभुजा ॥

[33] *Cf.* verse 16—"अङ्गश्रिया परिगतो जितकामरूपः
काञ्चीगुणाढ्य-वनिताभिरुपास्यमानः ।
कुर्व्वन् सुराष्ट्र-परिपालन-कार्य्यचिन्तां
यः सार्व्व भौम-चरितं प्रकटीकरोति ॥"

In fn. 1 p. 170 t. 2 of *Le Népal* M. Sylvain Lévi has mentioned the 'seconde interpretation possible' as follows :—

"Il est paré du diademe de Bengale (it should be Aṅga); il a vaincu le Kāmarūpa (Assam); less belles délicieuses de Kāñcī (Conjeveram) le servent; il est préoccupe d'assurer la protection du Surāṣṭra (Kathiavar); toute sa conduite manifeste un empereur du monde".

In this connection the learned historian also quotes a verse, containing an analogous instance from 'Le *Kāvyālaṁkāra* de Rudraṭa (X, 10; ed. Kāvyamālā, p. 134. :—

"आक्रम्य मध्यदेशं विदधत् संवाहनं तथाङ्गानाम् ।
पतति करः काञ्च्यामपि तव निर्जितकामरूपस्य ॥"

political influence was felt not only by the neighbouring countries of Aṅga in the south-east and Kāmarūpa in the east, but also by the distant places, Kāñchī in the far south and Surāshṭra in the south-west, and thus the king has been rightly described as having displayed the career of a *sārvvabhauma* king (lord-paramount). It may be noted here that both Bhagwanlal and Fleet missed these historical references in the words, used as proper names, viz. Aṅga, Kāmarūpa, Kāñchī and Surāshṭra, garbed in the rhetorical figure *ślesha* (*double-entendre*) in the verse. The puns disclose the meaning that the king was endowed with the fortune of Aṅga (*Aṅga-śriyā parigataḥ*); he conquered Kāmarūpa (*jita-Kāmarūpaḥ*); he was attended to by the accomplished women of Kāñchī (*Kāñchī-guṇ =āḍhya-vanitābhir=upasyamānaḥ*) and he applied his mind even to the work of administration in Surāshṭra (*kurvvan=Surāshṭra-paripālana-käryya-chintām*). That Jayadeva II's political influence reached these distant countries is also evident from the description (in v. 17) of the king as having been known, on account of his prowess, by the second nāme *Parachakrakāma* ("desiring to win the dominions of enemies"). He administered a kingdom from which the misfortunes of his people vanished by the sacrificial offerings of the Brāhmaṇas who received bounteous gifts from the monarch him-

The following verse from Sandhyākaranandin's *Rāmacharita* may also be compared here :—

"छकलापायित-कुन्तल-रुचि-माविल-लाट-कान्तिमवनमदङ्ग [ा]म् ।
अघरित-कर्ण टिन्नणलील[ां] घृत-मध्यदेशतनिमानमपि ॥"

Also *Cf.* v. 8 of the Belava inscription (*Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 40).

self,—a kingdom which was also free from internal troubles (*kaṇṭaka-varjjitaṁ*) and which was so much strengthened by the support of his own arms. It is then stated in the *praśasti* that this king of great and pure lineage caused to be made a silver water-lily, the grandeur and beauty of which are graphically described in the next few verses (vv 18-23), five of which (viz. vv. 20, 25, 27, 28 and 29) were of the king's own composition. This brilliant lotus was dedicated by King Jayadeva II's mother, the illustrious Vatsadevī to the deity Paśupati in the famous temple of that god in four-faced *liṅga* form. The religious merit accruing from this act of the son and his mother was assigned to the credit of the deceased king, Śivadeva II (vv 31-32). In v. 33 the poet of this eulogy names himself Buddhakīrtti and states that although his patron King Jayadeva, was himself a true poet the latter composed only five verses in honour of the silver lotus dedicated to the god and refrained from composing verses in eulogy of his own family which was left to be done by the poet-laureate. Therefore, out of devotion to his Majesty, the court-poet himself composed the rest of the *praśasti*. The last verse (v. 34) is a benedictory one in which Buddhakīrtti prays for the long life of the reigning sovereign, so anxious for the welfare and security of his subjects who, in their turn, were loyally devoted to the throne.

Names of several deities of the Hindu pantheon are found metioned in portion of the inscription describing the silver-lotus, e.g. Brahmā, Shaṇmukha (*Kārttikeya*), Vāsuki, Sthāṇu etc. Names also occur

in this portion, of the demon Daśānana (Rāvaṇa) and perhaps of the Buddhist god, Lokeśvara.

We think the chronology of the Nepal rulers should be discussed at this stage. We only hinted above that there was a fundamental difference between Bhagwanlal and Fleet regarding the interpretation of the years (*saṁvats*) referred to in the Nepal inscriptions. They, however, rightly agreed to interpret the dates marked by the smaller figures 34, 39, 45 (?) 46, 48, 119 and 153 as belonging to the Harsha era of 606 A.D.. According to this view we are also to refer the smaller figures of the dates, viz. 30, 32 and 137 in Sylvain Levi's additional collection (in Vol. III of his work *Le Ne'pal*) to the same Harsha era. But as regards the larger figures viz. 318, 335 (not 535), 386, 413 and 435, the late Dr. Fleet expressed his opinion that they should all be referred to the Gupta era on the supposition that the date 318 (not 316 as he wrongly stated) *saṁvat* in Bendall No. I must refer to the Gupta era of 319-20 A.D., because it belongs to the reign of King Śivadeva I mentioned in it as a contemporary of Aṁśuvarman, whom he identified with the king of that name, said to have reigned in Nepal during, or shortly before, the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang's visit in Nothern India in or about 637 A.D.. So the larger figures of dates, viz. 387, 402, 449, 489, 500 (?), 519 and 520 in Sylvain Le'vis's additional collection are, according to Fleet's view, to be referred to the Gupta era. But Fleet should not have based his calculation of all those larger dates on that solitary case of Bendall No. 1 and prepared his Table No. XI (Fleet—*Gupta Inscriptions*,

Introduction, p. 189) containing the list of the early rulers of Nepal according to it. It is unfortunate also that he could not discover the wrong reading by Bhagwanlal of the date of our No. 4 above, which the Pandit took to be 535 and not 335 which is the correct reading according to our view, the symbol for 300 being so clear in the published text. The name of the *dūtaka* Vikramasena in this grant may be identified with the same name in No. 6, dated Harsha-era 34 i.e. 640 A.D. So the date 335 of No. 4 is to be undoubtly explained as having reference to the Gupta era and therefore equal to 654-55 A.D.. It would be a preposterous date if the reading 535 be taken to be correct, for it would then equate with 854-855 A.D. although to all appearances the characters bolonged to the seventh century. It is very unfortunate again that a veteran palaeographist like the late Dr. Fleet[34] should have committed the blunder of referring all the larger dates in the early Nepal epigraphs to the Gupta era by overlooking the nature of their scripts belonging to different periods of history and misled himself into thinking that the date of the characters used, for example, in Mānadeva's inscription No. 1, which must have belonged to the imperial Gupta period of the fourth century A.D., should be pushed forward, more than three centuries. It is time that this astounding error of the late doctor was rectified in the interest of the true adjustment of the chronology of the early rulers of Nepal and scholars gave their best consideration to and accepted the view so

34 Fleet *C. I. I.* Vol. III, Introduction p. 189.

cautiously and conclusively put forward, with the help of the materials in his hand at the time, by Bhagwanlal that the larger dates (in our opinion, to the exclusion of those in Bendall I and Indraji No. 5 and in Sylvain Lévi's Nos. XI-XII) belonged to the Vikrama era commencing from 57 B. C.. After a very careful comparison of the forms of the letters used in Mānadeva's inscription No. 1 with those used in the inscriptions of all the first three or four imperial Gupta emperors, especially the forms of the letters *ṇa, ta, pa, bha, ya, la, sa,* and *ha,* we cannot but persuade ourselves to accept as true the view that the larger dates in the epigraphs of the early Nepal kings, upto at least the time of King Vasantadeva, should be referred to the Vikrama era. This view is also in keeping with the tradition current in Nepal that Vikramāditya (styled Vikramajit in Nepal) is said to have pushed his conquering arms into this mountainous country in the remote past and ruled it by introducing the *saṁvat* era there. Hence following Bhagwanlal and Bühler, Mr. C. V. Vaidya[35] also thinks that "there is not the least doubt that the Vikrama era has been in use in Nepal since a very long time." But the late Dr. Fleet[36] rejected totally the statement of the Nepal *Vaṁśāvalī* with regard to the visit of the traditional Vikramāditya to Nepal and his establishment of his era and thought that such a statement must only have been "a reminiscence of the conquest of the country by Harshavardhana of Kanauj and the adoption of the

35 *History of Mediaeval Hindu India,* Vol. I, p. 368.

36 Fleet-*Op. Cit.*, Introduction pp. 184-185.

Harsha era as the result." We have no doubt that the smaller dates are to be referred to the Harsha era, as stated before, but the larger dates hitherto discovered upto Vasantadeva's time must be referred to the Vikrama era, if palaeography is to be relied upon. The dates in Mānadeva's inscriptions must be referred to this era and never, by any stretch of imagination, to the Gupta era as done by Fleet. Moreover, some of the political, social and religious thoughts and ideas prevailing in the Gupta period in Magadha and other North Eastern provinces are clearly found reflected in the early Nepal records of Mānadeva's time. This also supports the theory of their use of the early Vikrama-era. With due deference to the great French savant, M. Sylvain Le'vi, we have to vary from his interpretation of the larger numerical figures of three digits (exceeding 200), representing the dates in the early Nepal inscriptions hitherto discoverd. He refers them to a Lichchavi era[37] (*saṁvat*) which commenced in his opinion in 110 A.D. So he adds 33 to the dates expressed in *saṁvat* in the Nepal records for equalising them with the dates in the Śaka era (current) and then adds 78 for making them correspond to dates in Christian era. This result he obtains by an astronomical calculation[38] based on the date mentioned in No. 1 of Bhagwanlal and No. I of his own, viz. "the first day of the bright half of the month of Jyeshtha of *Saṁvat* 386, while the moon

[37] *Vide-Le Ne pal*—t 3, p. 50.

[38] Cf. the passage :—"La date du pilier de Changu Narayan correspond dans cette hypothese au mardi 1er mai 496 J.—C"—*Le Ne'pal*—t. 3, p. 9.

was in the constellation Rohiṇī, in the excellent *muhūrta* called *abhijit*" and he arrives at the conclusion that such a combination of astronomical phenomena was only possible on Tuesday, the 1st May, 496 A.D.. Hence he starts a working hypothesis that the dates in *saṁvat* in the early Nepal inscriptions are to be referred to a Lichchhavi era, then in vogue, which had its starting point ("le point de départ") in the year 110 A.D.. If this view of M. Sylvain Lévi be fully endorsed, we shall have to fall into great difficulty in solving the dates in two inscriptions, viz. his own Nos. IX (Dharampur) and XII (Khopasi), both of which bear the same date [39] viz. 520 (as read by the French savant). The numerical figure however for the hundreds in these two inscriptions seems to be clearly a representative for 300 and not 500 ; hence the date should be read as 320 *saṁvat*. The same mistake was committed, as we have shown above, by Bhagwanlal regarding the date of his No. 4 which must be 335 *saṁvat*, and not 535, as his reading showed. M. Sylvain Lévi himself also doubted the reading[40] of the symbol for hundreds, specially the element 5 of 500 which seemed to him as written in the manner of 3 ('én maniere du 3'). From Plates XII and XIII of his inscriptions Nos. XI and XII respectively it can be clearly seen that the figure in question should represent 300 and not 500, exactly as we see the same symbol in plates illustrating Bhagwanlal's Nos. 1 and 4. On account of effacement of certain

39 *Le Népal*, t. 3, p. 59 and p. 80.

40 *Le Népal*, t. 3, p. 68.

portions in the plate of his No. IX we are not in a position to clearly read the symbols for the date which he reads as 510 (?) and as no plate is enclosed for the illustration of his No. X, of which the figures for the date are read by him as representing the number 519, we are unable to verify the same. We feel, however, inclined to state that these two dates were also 310 (?) and 319 *saṁvat.* At any rate, if we convert the *saṁvat* 320 (of Nos. XI-XII), which we take to be the correct date, to a date in Christian era by the addition of 110, in accordance with the hypothesis of M. Sylvain Lévi, we arrive at the figure (320+110=) 430 A.D. But this date (430 A.D.) is an impossible date for both Śivadeva I and Aṁśuvarman who are, without doubt, rulers of the seventh century A.D.. So we think that we should refer this date 320 (*saṁvat*) to the Gupta era and think that it corresponds with the date 639-40 A.D., just as the late Dr. Fleet explained the date 318 in Bendall No. 1 and we have interpreted the date 335 in Bhagwanlal No. 4. There is thus a difference of (57+110=) 167 years between our calculation and that of M. Sylvain Lévi regarding the interpretation of some of the larger dates in old Nepal records. Our result pushes the dates back to 167 years and they are therefore so many years earlier than those obtained by his way of calculation.

A correct adjustment of the chronology of the early kings of Nepal appears possible by adoption of a theory we venture to propound that three different eras were in vogue in Nepal in three different periods of her history. The group of kings of the

Lichchhavi dynasty of the first period from Mānadeva to Vasantadeva used only the *Vikrama-saṁvat* in their records; the second group of kings of the same dynasty from Śivadeva I to Udayadeva and the kings of the Ṭhākurī family and their successors, e.g. Aṁśuvarman, Jishṇugupta and Vishṇugupta, belonging to the middle period used respectively the *Gupta-saṁvat* and *Harsha-saṁvat*, simulaneously; while the third group of the Lichchhavi kings from Narendradeva to Jayadeva II used only the *Harsha-saṁvat*.

In this connection a note may be added on the order of succession of some of the rulers of the Lichchhavi dynasty and their head-quarters. We mark two important intervals in the list of Nepal kings as obtained from the text of Inscription No. 15 of Jayadeva II, one of eleven unnamed kings after Jayadeva I and the other of another eleven unnamed kings after Vasantadeva. From a careful reading and interpretation of verse 11 of this inscription, it may be inferred that the twelfth king, after the eleventh one who reigned during the second interval referred to above, was King Udayadeva, and his son King Narendradeva was therefore the thirteenth. The reading [41] of the first two lines of this verse as proposed by Bhagwanlal does not seem to have been quite correct. From his own annexed plate[42] we clearly find that there is no *ākāra* sign after the word *jāta* which is used in the singular number and not

[41] His reading was:—"अस्यान्तरेप्युदयदेव इति क्षितीशा—
ज्जातास्त्रयोदश [तत]श्च नरेन्द्रदेवः ।"

[42] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX, p. 178.

in the plural. An emendation may be proposed for the lacuna after the word *trayodaśa* by means of the word *nṛpa* as an epithet to Narendradeva—thus making the whole of the second line read thus:—*jātas=trayodaśa-[nṛpaś]=cha Narendradevaḥ.* According to this view the word *trayodaśa* is to be regarded not as a cardinal numeral (thirteen) but as an ordinal one (thirteenth). So there can be no question of an interval of thirteen unnamed kings in this record after Vasantadeva, but that of only eleven kings, including the names of Śivadeva I and his son Dhruvadeva, who were not mentioned by the court-poet of Jayadeva II, probably because these two kings of the Lichchhavi dynasty had lost their regal position as suzerains by allowing the kings of the Ṭhākurī family to rule collaterally with them from a different residence, Kailāsakūṭabhavana, during a period of almost a quarter of a century. However, according to our construction and interpretation of this controversial verse, Udayadeva and Dhruvadeva were respectively the twelfth and the thirteenth kings after Vasantadeva. So altogether we have a list of thirty-three kings of the Lichchhavi dynasty in inscription No. 15, the last of whom Jayadeva II ruled even in the year 759 A.D.. We have now no difficulty in cramming 33 rulers from Jayadeva I to Jayadeva II, both inclusive, within a period of about 759 years. This furnishes us with a very reasonable average of 23 years for each reign, so Bhagwanlal was not probably wrong in assigning the rule of Jayadeva I (the first Lichchavi conqueror of Nepal) to the beginning of the first century A. D.

It was Aṁśuvarman, the founder of the Ṭhākurī family of kings, who first established his royal residence at Kailāsakūṭabhavana from which he and his successors ruled in the western division as co-regents or collaterally, but who owed allegiance, (it may be, nominal) to the contemporary kings of the Lichchhavi dynasty ruling in the eastern division from the old residence called Mānagṛha which, as remarked above, was probably named after King Mānadeva. From the omission of the name of Mānagṛha in inscription No. 15 of Jayadeva II and in other contemporary or somewhat earlier records it appears that the last three Lichchhavi rulers beginning with Narendradeva had removed their administrative headquarters to Kailāsakūṭbhavana, which was probably the only royal residence during nearly the last century of the rule of that dynasty. The reign of the Ṭhākurī family extended only for three or four generations of kings. King Mānadeva,[43] who was in all probability a contemporary of the imperial Gupta emperor, Chandragupta I or his son Samudragupta, and also a few of Mānadeva's predecessors must have used the *Vikrama-saṁvat* in their epigraphs, as it was this era that was in vogue in many parts of India at that time. It seems quite probable that the descendants of Vasantadeva

[43] *Cf.* the following passage from M. Sylvain Lévi's *Le Népal* t. 3, p. 3:—'C'est aux environs du ve siecle que la paléographie tendrait a ranger Mānadeva, comme avaient fait Bhagvanlal et Bühler qui interpretraient la date de l'inscription par l'ere vikrama (386 saṃvat = 329 J.-C.), a l'époque meme de Samudragupta "dont les edits sur piliers ressemblent totalement aux inscription de Mānadeva"'.

began to use, until the time of Harshavardhana's occupation of Nepal (if it was really a historical fact) or of his political influence in that country, the *Gupta-saṁvat* from the time when Samudragupta forced the Nepal king to pay allegiance to his lord-paramountcy as mentioned before and to accept the era introduced by his family from the beginning of his father Chandragupta I's reign (in 319-20 A.D.).

With these few remarks on the question of the chronology of early Nepal kings and the order of their succession we insert below a table largely based on the one prepared by Bhagwanlal and Buhler, with some small corrections here and there in accordance with our interpretation of the controversial verse (v. 11) and calculation of the two intervals of eleven unnamed kings in Jayadeva II's inscription (No. 15).

The Lichchhavi Kings Of Nepal

(Also called Sūryavaṁśi kings in the Nepal *Vaṁśāvalī*)

1. Jayadeva I, about 1 A.D. [No. 15].

2-12. Names not mentioned in No. 15.

13. Vṛshadeva, c. 260 A.D. [Nos. 1 and 15].

14. Śaṅkaradeva, s/o 13, c. 285 A. D. [Nos. 1 and 15].

15. Dharmadeva, s/o 14, married to Rājyavatī, c. 305 A.D. [Nos. 1 and 15].

16. Mānadeva, s/o 15, [Vikrama-] saṁvat 386-413 (=329-356 A.D.) [Nos. 1 and 15 ; and S. Lévi II].

17. Mahīdeva, s/o 16, c. 360 A.D.

18. Vasantadeva, or Vasantasena, s/o 17, [Vikrama-] saṁvat 435 (=378 A. D.) and saṁvat 449 (=392 A.D.) [Nos. 3 and 15 ; and S. Lévi VI].

19-27. Lineal descendants of 18, names not mentioned in No. 15.

28. Śivadeva I, c. 610 A.D. Sylvain Lévi IX-XII [Gupta-] saṁvat 310 (?), 319, 320, Bendall I [Gupta-] saṁvat 318 (=637-38 A.D.) [No. 5—but not mentioned in No. 15].

Co-regent, Aṁśuvarman, first a *sāmanta,* then a *mahārāja,* [Harsha]-saṁvat 30, 32, 34, 39, 45 (?) (=640-651 A.D.) [Nos. 6-8, Bendall II and S. Lévi XIII-XV.]

29. Dhruvadeva, [Harsha-] saṁvat 48 (=654 A.D.) [No. 9, but not mentioned in No. 15].

Co-regent, Jishṇugupta [Harsha-] saṁvat 46 (=652 A.D.) [Nos. 9—11 and S. Lévi XVI].

N.B. Vikramasena, probably s/o 28, not a reigning prince mentioned as *Rājaputra* in No. 4 of [Gupta-]-saṃvat 335 (=654-55 A.D.), and not 535 as wrongly read by Bhagwanlal

Co-regents, Jishṇugupta and perhaps Vishṇugupta, mentioned as heir-apparent in No. 9.

A. N.B. Aṁśuvarman, mentioned in the Nepal *Vaṁśāvalī* as the founder of the Ṭhākurī dynasty, Kali 1000=101 B.C., was wrongly pushed back more than seven or eight centuries.

B. N.B. Kings Nos. 32 and 33 respectively were mentioned as the 7th and 12th princes of the Ṭhākurī line. Probably this incorporation also is wrong in the *Vaṁśāvalī.*

30. Udayadeva, c. 670 A.D. [No. 15] mentioned as heir-apparent in No. 7 [Harsha-] saṃvat 39 (=645 A.D., of course of the Lichchhavi king who was the suzerain even of Aṁśuvarman, the grantor.

31. Narendradeva, c. 690 A.D. [No. 15].

32. Śivadeva II, s/o 31, married to Vatsadevī, daughter of Maukhari Bhogavarman, and daughter's daughter of Ādityasena of Magadha, [Harsha-] saṁvat 119—134 (=725-740 A.D.) [No. 12 and S. Le'vi XIX-XX].

33. Jayadeva II, *Parachakrakāma*, s/o 32, married to Rājyamatī, daughter of Śrī-Harsha who was king of Gauḍa, Uḍra and other countries, Kaliṅga and Kosala, a female decendant of Bhagadatta undoubtedly of the Kāmarūpa dynasty, [Harsha-] saṁvat 153 (=759 A.D.) [Nos. 13-15 and S. Le'vi XVIII)].

The positive historical information about early Nepal kings, gathered from a study of the inscriptional details may be summarised here. The Lichchhavi kings of Nepal trace their descent from the sun-god and hence they are rightly described in the *Vaṁśāvalī* as *Sūryavaṁśī*. There were 33 rulers hitherto known beginning with Jayadeva I and ending in Jayadeva II, covering a period of at least 759 years with an average of 23 years for each reign. The last known date of Jayadeva II is Harsha-saṁvat 153 i.e. 759 A.D. Hence Jayadeva I may be regarded as the first king who ruled Nepal sometime in the beginning of the Christian era and established the Nepal branch of the royal Lichchhavi dynasty.

After an interval of about two and a half centuries during which eleven unnamed rulers of the same

dynasty reigned in Nepal, we come across the name of King Vṛshadeva, who was a Buddhist in faith and who being of a religious disposition did not trouble himself about political matters, although he possessed great valour and wealth. The *Vaṁśāvalī* also states that this king built monasteries (*vihāras*) and installed images of Lokeśvara and other Buddhist divinities. He was fortunate in having several learned and accomplished sons, one of whom, Śaṅkaradeva by name, succeeded him on the throne. This king had to measure strength in battle with his enemies (unknown by name), and was unconquerable. He carried on the administration of his prosperous kingdom with the help of his trusted officials. These two Nepal kings belonged probably to the period which is regarded by historians as one of the darkest in Indian history, namely that between the extinction of the Kushana and Andhra dynasties in the first quarter of the third century A.D. and the rise of the imperial Gupta line in the fourth.

Next reigned Śaṅkaradeva's virtuous son King Dharmadeva, who inherited a vast kingdom. He made a fresh campaign of conquests and erected high "pillars of victory" on earth. His wife was the faithful queen Rājyavatī. We think he was probably a contemporary of Chandragupta I of the imperial Gupta dynasty and his father Ghaṭokacha. This Dharmadeva was succeded by his famous son Mānadeva, who was a very great monarch of Nepal. His mother, Queen Rājyavatī, wanted to immolate herself on the king's death, and announced her

determination to her able son Mānadeva, whom she appointed to the hereditary kingship, but she was prevented from putting an end to her life by the importunity of her son. His inscription dated 329 A.D. (V.E. 386) informs us that he gave his mother great delight by a promise to repay his father's debts by launching into military feats as befits the Kshatriyas. The king kept his promise and led an expedition to the east for crushing his enemies, but during his military activities he was good enough to allow those kings to keep their own position, who remained obedient to him. After having forced to submission some of the rebellious *sāmantas* of the east, Mānadeva had to proceed to the west where also he wanted to subdue a misguided feudal chief. The mutilated condition of this famous king's inscription prevents us from forming our idea of his other historical achievements. In the year 320 A.D. (=387 V.E.) Mānadeva installed the image of a Vishṇu (in his Vāmana incarnation) for the increase of the religious merit of his mother. One Guhamitra, the chief of the merchants' corporation, installed the image of the sun-god (of the name of Indra) in the year 345 A.D. (=402 V.E.). The king favoured a private person named Jayeśvara with permission to erect a *liṅga* of Śiva in 356. A.D. (V.E. 413). His was a long reign covering a period of not less than 27 years. It seems quite reasonable to suppose that the royal residence of Nepal, called *Mānagṛha*, from where the successors, immediate and remote, of Mānadeva ruled Nepal, was established by this king or one of his descendants, and named after him (Māna).

After Mānadeva, his son Mahīdeva became king and the latter was succeeded by his son Vasantadeva, who ruled Nepal from Mānagṛha residence. He used the title of *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*, which was also the title of his late father, mentioned as *Parama-daivata Bappa*. He was known for his learning, policy, compassion, charity, politeness and valour. He was the reigning sovereign of Nepal in 378 A.D. (V.E. 435), when his chief administrator of (criminal) justice and Police officer (*sarvva-daṇḍa-nāyaka-mahāpratihāra*) was Ravigupta. The latter officer is also found to have acted in the same capacity in the year 392 A.D. Under him acted a local official head of a place of a grant, transacting administrative business, and his name seems to have been Mahīśīla. His position appears to have been like that of the *vishayapatis* under the Gupta rulers. We think that this Vasantadeva, or more probably his father or his grand-father, was the Nepal ruler who had to yield to the Gupta emperor Samudragupta, and bow to his imperial authority, when the latter led his conquering expedition to most parts of India including Nepal. Vasantadeva enjoyed a peaceful reign after having settled with his enemies and received the homage of subdued *sāmantas*. It cannot be determined with certainty if this king's enemies were his own Lichchhavi kinsmen of the imperial Gupta line. We have remarked above on clear palaeographic evidence and other arguments that the first group of Nepal kings from Vṛshadeva to Vasantadeva used in their records the Vikrama era and this explodes the theory that this era was not genuine and was an invention of the sixth century A.D.

It is quite probable that *mahārāja* Gaṇadeva, (S. Lévi VII) whose name does not, however, occur in Bhagwanlal No. 15, ruled from Mānagṛha after the reign of Vasantadeva. After this group's rule when the political influence of the Guptas was very great on Nepal, the second group of kings, e.g. Śivadeva I and Dhruvadeva of Mānagṛha, used the Gupta era in their records. But when, reigning collaterally with them from the second residence, Kailāsakūṭabhavana, Aṁśuvarman of the Ṭhākurī line and his successors were influenced by Harshavardhana's conquest of, or only a conquering expedition into Nepal, they introduced, while at the same time owing allegiance to their suzerains of the Lichchhavi dynasty, the Harsha era in their documents.

Kings Śivadeva I and Dhruvadeva are two of the eleven kings (not thirteen, as shown before), who reigned during the interval between Vasantadeva (the 18th king) and Udayadeva (the 30th). Although these two kings are not found mentioned in Jayadeva II's inscription No. 15 dated 759 A.D., they have their own and other contemporary records to tell us the story of their life and the events of their royal career. Śivadeva I, styled *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja* and the banner of the Lichchhavikula ruled as suzerain in Nepal from the royal residence of Mānagṛha, which was then more than three hundred years old. Under his suzerainty ruled simultaneously King Aṁśuvarman of the Ṭhakurī family from the residence at Kailāsakūṭabhavana. On the advice of the latter, described as enjoying the position of a *mahāsāmanta* only, Śivadeva I issued in Gupta-saṁvat 318 i.e.

637-38 A.D. an address to the heads and other householders of a certain village, regarding the right of entry thereinto of Government officers. In this charter the *dūtaka* was Bhogavarman, who may be identified with the nephew (sister's son) of Aṁśuvarman, bearing the same name, who was a descendant of the Maukhari dynasty, and later became the father-in-law of Śivadeva II. So through this Bhogavarman, Aṁśuvarman's sister's son, whose daughter Vatsadevī (daughter of Ādityasena's daughter) was married to Śivadeva II, we find a matrimonial union between the two royal families (the Lichchhavi and the Ṭhākurī) of Nepal. The latter two, the Maukhri dynasty and that of the Later Guptas of Magadha are, therefore, connected together by intermarriage. There is a reference in the Nepal *Vaṁśāvalī* also to the effect that Aṁśuvarman himself was the son-in-law of a *Sūryavaṁśī* king named Viśvadevavarman, whose name, however, cannot be found in the hitherto known epigraphic records. The Maukhari Bhogavarman is mentioned in an inscription of Aṁśuvarman dated 645 A.D., so it can be easily believed that he was very young when he acted as a *dūtaka* in 637-38 A.D., in his maternal uncle's palace at Nepal, where his mother Bhogadevī also installed a *Śivaliṅga*. If this view of ours be regarded as correct, Śūrasena, the husband of Bhogadevī, becomes a Maukhari prince, who might have ruled at Kanauj after Harsha's death, and his son Bhogavarman was probably the last Maukhari king known in history. This Bhogavarman acted also as a *dūtaka* in another charter (S. Lévi IX), of which the date is nearly of the same period, but which was issued by Śivadeva I on the

advice of the *mahāsāmanta* Aṁśuvarman. The inscription of Thoka (S. Le'vi X), which was dated in our opinion 319 Gupta era, and in which Vipravarmagomin was the *dūtaka*, also belonged to Śivadeva I's reign. The two charters (S. Le'vi XI-XII) dated Gupta *saṁvat* 320, in which *vārtta* Bhogachandra and Deśavarma-gomin respectively acted as the *dūtaka*, were *samājñāpanā* forms of address issued from the Mānagṛha palace by Śivadeva I. In some of Śivadeva I's inscriptions we find Aṁśuvarman described as a *mahāsāmanta*, who achieved fame by quelling the country's enemies by his heroism and victory in battles and administered properly the affairs of the kingdom. These services of Aṁśuvarman formed, according to the opinion of Bhagwanlal Indraji, the nucleus of his royal or quasi-royal position in Nepal politics, and he gradually rose into prominence during his ṣuzerain Śivadeva I's reign, by making a mark in the political life of Nepal by his warlike achievements. From his inscription dated 640 A.D. this prince, described as being favoured by the feet of Paśupati-bhaṭṭāraka and meditating those of his *Bappa* (father) who, however, is not mentioned as enjoying any dignity like that of a *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*, began to issue command from the second residence of Kailāsakūṭabhavana, probably established by himself. The *Vaṁśavalī* relates that Aṁśuvarman trasferred the seat of Government to a place called Madhyalakha ; but we find that all his epigraphic records and some of those of his successors, were issued from Kailāsakūṭabhavana. It cannot be ascertained if the two places were identical. Anyhow the influence of

the new residence was increasing from now, and the Lichchhavi suzerains were gradually losing their royal power and assuming, probably, the status of nominal rulers. Aṁśuvarman's chief administrator of justice (*sarvva-daṇḍa-nāyaka*) was Vikramasena, who acted as the *dūtaka* in an official transaction. The Chief Justice, *Rājaputra* Vikramasena, was also the *dūtaka* in the charter (Lévi XV) dated 638 A.D., which was issued by the *mahāsāmanta* as a direct order (*svayam=ājñā*) bestowing some privileges on the inhabitants of the village of Śaṅgāgrāma. It is almost certain that this Vikramasena should be identified with the *dūtaka* of the same name, having the use of the title *Rājaputra*, in the inscription (No. 4) dated G. E. 335 (not 535 G. E. as read by Bhagwanlal), i.e. in 654-55 A.D. He may have been a son of Śivadeva I, though never a reigning prince. In 640 A.D. Aṁśuvarman issued a charter through his chief Army-officer (*mahābalādhyaksha*) named Vindusvāmin. It has been shown above from the contents of another charter, issued from Kailāsakūṭabhavana, that *Paśupati-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānudhyāta* Aṁśuvarman gave directions to the officers of the Western Court (*Paśchimādhikaraṇa*) that they should not interfere with the working of the Committees called *Adhaḥśālā-Pañchālikās*, who were appointed by him to administer the estates of the *liṅgas* dedicated respectively by his sister, Bhogadevī, mother of Bhogavarman and wife of Rājaputra Śūrasena, by his niece Bhāgyadevī and by the other elder brothers (ancestors ?) of the last-mentioned princess. Aṁśuvarman is herein described as a devotee

of the god Śiva, and also as taking the greatest delight in making proper arrangements for the stability and preservation of religious institutions, as he was able by pondering over the meaning of the various *śāstras* to destroy false doctrine (*asad-darśana*), by which one must mean in this context Buddhist philosophy. We have already seen from some of his inscriptions (e.g. S. Lévi XIII-XIV) how anxious Aṁśuvarman always remained for the welfare of his subjects. His constant aim was "*kathaṁ prajā me sukhitā bhavet*" —how his people would feel happy. He made benefactions to all sorts of religious and other institutions, as well as to several persons and villages. The list of donations in the above mentioned inscriptions is evidence in point. *Yuvarāja* Udayadeva (probably the son of the Lichchhavi king Dhruvadeva) was the *dūtaka* who transacted the business regarding this arrangement of King Aṁśuvarman. If this identification be correct, it may be supposed that there was cordial relation yet intact between the two Nepal royal families.

Here we should pause for a while to consider what the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chawng, has stated about Nepal and its ruler at the time of his travels in India (629-645 A.D.). The pilgrim narrates[44] that "the capital was above 20 li in circuit ; the country yielded grain and much fruit, also copper, yaks, and francolins; copper-coins were the medium of exchange; the climate was cold ; the people were rude and deceitful ; good faith and rectitude were slighted by them ; they had

[44] Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II, pp. 83-85.

no learning but were skilful mechanics; they were ugly and coarse in appearance and they believed both in false and true religion, the Buddhist monasteries and the Deva temples touching each other. There were above 2000 Buddhist ecclesiastics who were attached to both 'vehicles' and the number of non-Buddhists was not ascertained." This is all that the Chinese traveller says of this country and the character of its people. In the opinion of the Buddhist pilgrim the false religion, in the above description, must refer to Brāhmanism, but we have pointed out before that Aṁśuvarman was a devout believer in Brāhmanism having destroyed "fallacious philosophy" *(asad-darśana)* which again must refer to Buddhism. As regards the kings of Nepal, the pilgrim adds[45] :—"The kings of Nepal were Kshatriya Lichchhavis, and they were eminent scholars and believing Buddhists. A recent king whose name is given as Ang-shu-fa-ma or Aṁśuvamma in Chinese Kuang-chan or Radiant Armour, had composed a treatise on Etymology." This description of the kings of Nepal is largely corroborated by the evidence of inscriptions referred to above. The pilgrim's observations on Vṛji and Nepal have made some of the annotators suspicious, and they think that the pilgrim may not have been to those two places and has described them as he heard from others and learnt from books, more specially because *The Life* does not mention a visit to this Vajji country or to Nepal between his travels in Śvetapur and Magadha

[45] *Ibid*, p. 84.

which he personally visited. Watters, however, regards it "not impossible that Yuan Chwang may have personally visited Nepal" and he adds, moreover, that "at this time, about 645 A.D., Nepal was a dependency of T'u-fan or Tibet, and it joined that country in sending a contingent to help Wang Hsüan-Tse in his trouble with the usurper of Magadha". That the paramount rulers of Nepal belonged to the Lichchhavi dynasty admits of no doubt, but Aṁśuvarman described by the Chinese pilgrim as a "recent king" was himself not a Lichchhavi, but was first a *sāmanta* of that dynasty of rulers and later succeeded in assuming larger powers and even used the loftier title of *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja*, as stated before. It does not seem to be true that the rulers of the two dynasties (Lichchhavi and Ṭhākurī) in Nepal owed their allegiance to Tibet. Again Aṁśuvarman appears to have been reigning even upto the year 646 A.D., if not 651-52 A.D., in case the reading of the date 45 Harsha *saṁvat* in Inscription No. 8 of Vibhuvarman, one of the king's employees, be taken as correct. In that case he could never be described as a "recent king" by the pilgrim travelling there in 645 A.D. From these circumstances also it is indeed doubtful whether the Chinese traveller actually visited Nepal. Mr. Vaidya thinks that Harshavardhana's conquest of Nepal was a definite historical event and that this emperor forced Śivadeva I (the Lichchhavi king) to introduce in Nepal the Harsha era and this happened sometime about 610 A.D. after which Aṁśuvarman became ascendant in the other Court. This king ruled in Nepal from Kailāsa-kūṭabhavana contemporaneously with Harshavardhana

during the latter part of the North Indian emperor's rule, perhaps for a few years even after his death.

Nepal assisted the Tibetan army which proceeded to help the Chinese envoy, Wang-hiuen-tse against Arjuna (or Aruṇāśva) of Tirhut who usurped the throne of Harsha after his death. This defeat of the usurper was brought about by the combined forces of China, Tibet and Nepal, assisted by the force of the Kāmarūpa king, before 650 A.D. and we believe that the Nepal kings of the two dynasties who thus helped the Chinese and the Tibetan armies were Dhruvadeva of the Lichchhavi line and either Aṁśuvarman of the Ṭhākurī or his successor Jishṇugupta (who probably belonged to a different line).

The first date we know of Jishṇugupta is H. E. 48 (=654 A.D.). Like the preceding ruler, Aṁśuvarman, Jishṇugupta also styles himself *Bhagavat-Paśupati-Bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta* and *Bapp-pādānu-dhyāta* and issues his charters from the new residence Kailāsakūṭabhavana. In a record (No. 9) of this ruler dated 48 H. E. we find a reference to a repair-work of a *tilamaka* (water-course) which was led by *Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja* Aṁśuvarman, but which was destroyed for want of earlier repairs. *Yuvarāja* Vishṇugupta acted as the *dūtaka* in this charter. He acted also as the *dūtaka* in the Thankot inscription (S. Lévi XVI). It seems quite reasonable to suppose that the higher title of *mahārājādhirāja* was assumed by Aṁśuvarman later in his reign, as he was called simply a *sāmanta* and a *mahāsāmanta* earlier, and since then he wielded more regal power causing propor-tionate reduction of the same to the suzerain family of

Lichchhavi kings of Mānagṛha, which seems to have continued as the royal residence during the reign of Bhaṭṭāraka-mahārāja Dhruvadeva, whose lord-paramountcy was acknowledged by this Jishṇugupta. Two epithets *puṇyānvayad=āgata-rājyyasampat* and *samasta-pau[rāśri]'ta-śāsana* as applied to this king are important as showing that his kingly position was obtained from a virtuous family and that his commands were obeyed by all citizens. This suggests that Jishṇugupta had no lineal connection with the preceding Ṭhākurī ruler, Aṁśuvarman, but only succeeded to his rank as a ruler in Kailāsakūṭabhavana, whence probably he fulfilled his administrative duty towards the people of the city. This view is supported by the epithet *Somānvayabhūshaṇa*, as applied to Jishṇuguptadeva in Thankot inscription (S. Lévi XVI), where he is not found using any title like *mahāsāmanta* or *mahārāja*. It seems that after Dhruvadeva the nominal suzerain occupying the throne at the Mānagṛha residence was a prince called Mānadeva, but no kingly title is used along with his name in that inscription. He was probably not a reigning sovereign at all, Jishṇugupta being the actual ruler of the people of Nepal at the time. We have the name of one Chandravarman, who was a *sāmanta* under Jishṇugupta himself. Doubt will always remain in the minds of some scholars, whether the line of rulers represented by Aṁśuvarman, Jishṇugupta and their successor or successors ruled from Kailāsakūṭabhavana, collaterally by division of power in the whole of Nepal between themselves and the rulers of the Lichchhavi family of Mānagṛha. We shall see later on that Mānagṛha

ceased to play its part as the old royal residence during at least the reigns of the last two Lichchhavi rulers viz. Śivadeva II and Jayadeva II, both of whom seem to have their residence at the palace named Bhadrādhivāsabhavana (cf. S. Lévi XX). It appears that the rulers of Mānagṛha had had a troublous time before the unknown date of Inscription No. 10, and that Aṁśuvarman secured good prospects (*upāttāyatiḥ*) by his success in quelling powerful enemies of his lord-paramount. His successor, Jishṇugupta, had also to devote his mind to finding out means for freeing the Nepalese people headed by his suzerain, *Bhaṭṭāraka* Dhruvadeva, from disturbing calamities. Constructive works of public utility, such as leading water-courses and conduits, formed a special feature in Nepal, and both Aṁśuvarman and Jishṇugupta are credited in their own charters with having undertaken such works for the benefit of the people whose representative committees were sometimes directed to spend money out of the collective taxes of their villages towards the up-keep of these benefactions. A donation to the Pāśupata congregation for the provision of repair-work of a temple of Chhatra-Chaṇḍeśvara and a conduit of water (*praṇālikā*) was made during the prosperous and victorious reign of (*pravardhamāna-vijaya-rājya*) of Jishṇugupta. The king's name in the charter dated 82 H.E. i.e. 688 A.D. (Bendall No. III) appears to be lost, but very probably the name was that of King Narendradeva, father of Śivadeva II. The name of the *dūtaka* of this grant, however, is given as Bhaṭṭāraka *Yuvarāja* Skandadeva. King Narendradeva again was the son of Udayadeva

(according to our opinion stated above), and he was a great ruler having under his suzerainty a large number of vassal kings who used to pay him homage.

Narendradeva's son and successor was King Śivadeva II, one of whose charters, issued from the residence at Kailāsakūṭabhavana, bears date 119 in Harsha era (=725 A.D.) ; and this evidently indicates that he enjoyed a long reign in Nepal. During this and the next king's reign no trace of the so-called double or collateral Government, which was prevalent during a portion of the last hundred years, is found to exist. King Śivadeva II himself used the imperial titles *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhirāja* in addition to the usual epithets, used by all former kings, viz. *Bhagavat-Paśupati-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānugṛhīta* and *Bappa-pādānudhyāta*. That this king had a most tolerant attitude in the matter of religion is clearly seen from the fact that he established, on the one hand, the Śiva-god (in the *liṅga* form), named after himself as Śivadeveśvara, for the up-keep of whose temple he granted a village as *agrahāra*, according to the dictum of *bhūmichchhidranyāya*, to a sect of the Paśupatāchāryyas and on the other, a Buddhist monastery named Śivadeva-vihāra for the benefit of the fraternity of Buddhist monks (*Āryya-bhikshu-saṁgha*) to which also he granted a village. There is a reference to another grant (S. Lévi XX) made by this king to the fraternity of Buddhist monks residing in the same *vihāra*. In the former grant his son Rājaputra Jayadeva was the *dūtaka* and in the latter the king himself acted as such. His character and accomplishments as a sovereign have been very

graphically described in the famous inscription (No. 15) of his son Jayadeva II. A conqueror and efficient administrator as he was, this king was easily offered the hand of Vatsadevī whom he married. This princess was the daughter of Bhogavarman, the crest-jewel of the illustrious Varmans of the Maukhari dynasty, who were so rich in strength of arms and who put all hostile kings to shame. She was also connected with the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha as being the daughter's daughter of the great Ādityasena, called in this record *Magadhādhipa*. The mutilated inscription No. 14 dated 145 Harsha era i.e. 751 A.D., of which the portion containing the names of the king and the place of issue is broken away and lost, seems to have belonged not to the reign of Śivadeva II but to his son and successor Jayadeva II, whose reign, as we think, commenced about 740 A.D.; and we also believe that the *dūtaka* mentioned therein as *Yuvarāja* Vijayadeva was very likely the actual heir-apparent, Jayadeva II's son. Bhaṭṭaraka Vijayadeva is also mentioned to have acted as the *dūtaka* in the inscription (S. Lévi XVIII) dated 743 A.D. If this inscription could be referred to Śivadeva II's reign as was done by Fleet, then this *Yuvarāja* was probably a second son of the king and hence a brother of Jayadeva II. In this case one may also hesitate to regard this as a "vicarious" name of Jayadeva II as was done by Bhagwanlal. Can it be true that *all* sons of early Nepal kings including those who were not really heirs-apparent to the throne were called *Yuvarājas?* We have a reference to an announcement in this epigraphic record to the people of Nepal,

which clearly indicates that breakers of the public peace and obstructors of the use of public works, such as water-courses etc., were produced in the royal courts (*rājakula*) for trial. The record dated 151 H.E. (=757 A.D.) announcing the grant by a private individual to a committee (*Pañchaka*) belonged in our opinion to the reign of Jayadeva II. There is an allusion in an inscription of Śivadeva II (No. 12) to a supply of labour from villages by Nepal kings for the Labour Service of Bhoṭṭa (Bhutān ?).

As to Jayadeva II, the last known king of the Lichchhavi dynasty of Nepal, we first notice him as the *dūtaka* of a grant in the inscription dated 119 Harsha era (=725 A.D.), where he is named Rājaputra-Jayadeva. In the mutilated inscription (S. Lévi XIX) in which we find reference to an information of labour people (*vishṭimanushya-sambandha*) and tradesmen carrying on business in royal courts (*rājakula-vyavasāyins*), the *dūtaka* was the same Rājaputra Jayadeva. More important historical information about this king who really became a lord-paramount can only be obtained from his own *praśasti* (No. 15). He was the son and successor of Śivadeva II and was born of the famous Queen Vatsadevī. He himself, however, married the daughter of Harsha, king of Kāmarūpa, who is described in that inscription as the lord of Gauḍa, Uḍra, and other countries, as well as of Kaliṅga and Kosala. It is also stated there, in the garb of puns, that King Jayadeva II extended his political influence over the Aṅga country with the fortunes of which he was endowed, conquered Kāmarūpa, approached Kāñchī in the south and bestowed his attention even on the work of

administration of the distant Surāshṭra country. Hence the poet of the eulogy, Buddhakīrtti, rightly states that Jayadeva II displayed the career of a universal monarch (*sārvvabhauma-charitaṁ prakaṭīkaroti*) and was, therefore, known to people by his second name *Parachakrakāma*, "one desirous of winning the kingdoms of his enemies." This king was very liberal, learned, far-seeing and self-respecting. His people were free from all sorts of misfortunes and internal disturbances. The Brāhmaṇas received bounteous gifts from his treasury for making sacrificial offerings to the gods. This certainly speaks of the good administration of his kingdom. He caused to be made the famous silver-lotus which his mother Vatsadevī dedicated to the temple of the god Paśupati in honour of her deceased husband King Śivadeva II. The king was also a poet of a very high order, as the five verses of his own composition in the *praśasti* may show. He is described as living in 153 H.E. (i.e. 759 A.D.) in good health and the court-poet wished for him yet a very long life.

The chapter may be closed with the remark that the culture and civilisation of this mountainous country during the period under notice were exactly similar to those prevailing in the other parts of India on the plains. In this respect Nepal may be said to have formed an integral part of India at the time. The society, religion and politics of this wonderful country—"an uninterrupted succession of hill and valley"—as represented in her early epigraphic records are distinctly of the same type and order as in the rest of India, specially in North-Eastern India. Nepal enjoyed no civilisation alien to that of India herself.

CHAPTER XII

Concluding Remarks

We intend to bring the work to a close by making a few general remarks on some of the special administrative, economic, social and religious features of the period dealt with in the previous chapters. Much space, however, need not be devoted to this subject, for we have incidentally referred to the culture and mode of life of the people of North-Eastern India, in our treatment of the general political condition in the foregoing pages. A short reference to the Hindu (rather Brāhmanic) renaissance, which was so clearly marked in the glorious period of the imperial Gupta rule in India, the Periclean age of Indian history as some historians may call it, will be made in this connection. To put this matter in the briefest possible way, we may quote a line from the history[1] of India, written by the late Dr. Vincent Smith, who says that in India, during this period,—"Literature, art, and science flourished in a degree beyond the ordinary, and gradual changes in religion were effected without persecution." There is ample evidence to show that inspite of the fact that the imperial Gupta emperors embraced Brāhmanical Hinduism and styled themselves *parama-bhāgavatas* or *parama-daivatas*, they adopted a

[1] *Oxford History of India*, 2nd edition, pp. 156-157.

general policy of perfect religious toleration. They seem to have officially recognised the worship of gods and goddesses of other Brāhmanical sects, and also showed patronage even to the religious institutions of the non-Brāhmanic sects viz. Buddhism and Jainism, which were still, of course, believed in by many families, under a somewhat modified form. The people of the period enjoyed full liberty of making perpetual endowments to temples or monasteries; and one could even, irrespective of his own religious persuasion, make donations to institutions belonging to other faiths. As an illustration[2] we may refer here to the donation of land, purchased from the Government by the Brāhman couple, Nāthaśarman and his wife Rāmī, for the worship of the Jinas (Arhats), in the great Jaina *vihāra* at Vaṭagohālī mentioned in the Paharpur inscription. This Jaina *vihāra* was an older institution existing probably in the same locality of Paharpur (in the Rajshahi district), situated in the old Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti*. The Brāhmanical temple recently excavated out of the mound at that place belonged to the late Gupta period and according to archaeologists its type is similar to that of Brāhmanical temples of Java. Many "Brāhmanical and Buddhist bas-reliefs and terra-cotta plaques, dating from the late Gupta times" were also found at this place during the excavations. These North-Bengal relics speak of the prevalence of three different faiths in one and the same place, during the Gupta period, although we find that the influence of the non-orthodox

[2] *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XX, p. 59 ff.

religions was waning in this period on account of the growing renovation of Brāhmanism under the patronage of the Guptas.

It may be noted here that during the four or five centuries before the rise of the Gupta dynasty, Brāhmanism and along with it, the Sanskrit language and literature, suffered a good deal on account of the ascendancy of Buddhism and the cultivation of the Prakṛits under the patronage of the Kushān kings. During that period people in many parts of the country ceased even to perform some of the Vedic rites, and to show veneration to gods and Brāhmans. The kings did not care to celebrate the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, even on the assumption of supreme sovereign power. The late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar in his admirable treatise,[3] *A Peep into the Early History of India*, has shown that "the Brāhmanic revival may be understood to have truly begun" in the time of Wema-Kadphises, who styled himself a worshipper of Maheśvara. He also pointed out that some of the kings of foreign origin "were no doubt Hinduized, but they were not Brāhmanized. And the Brāhmans themselves complained of their being neglected by the Yavanas, Śakas and Pahlavas". Hence he thought that "an all-sided revival and renovation could proceed only under the patronage of Hindu princes", like the Guptas.

We have seen before that the first few Gupta monarchs were great patrons of learning and all kinds

[3] Reprinted and published by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Bombay, 1920. Cf. pp. 56-74.

of fine arts. The general consensus of opinion amongst scholars points to Kālidāsa, the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist, having flourished during the Gupta period. It is quite true that extensive royal patronage to the Muses made it possible for poets like Harisheṇa, Vatsabhaṭṭi and the like, to appear in such poetic glory. The Buddhist teacher and philosopher Vasubandhu, Āsaṅga and the former's pupil Diṅnāga also lived during this period. Sir Ramkrishna was also of opinion that this period was " the age when metrical Smṛtis, Purāṇas and Bhāshyas or commentaries containing explanatory, apologetic, and controversial matter, began to be written ; and the general literary impulse was communicated to other branches of learning including poetry ". Some chapters of the *Mahābhārata*, containing reference to the races and tribes who set the Brāhmans at defiance and gradually ceased to perform their religious rites, were probably interpolated into the epic, and the *Manusaṁhita* was also in all probability composed, during this period. The Purāṇas were recast, and it is assumed that the *Vāyu*, the oldest of them, was written under Gupta patronage. The epigraphic records, from which we derived the materials for the previous chapters, show clearly how far the worship of the various deities, belonging to the three chief cults, viz. Vaishṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism, was adopted by the people of this age, and a study of the Purāṇas, supposed to have been written during the time, convinces one of the considerable progress made by these cults. It is quite probable too that Śabarasvāmin, the great commentator

on the Mīmāṁsā, and the great Prabhākara of the other school in the same branch of philosophy, who fought so hard against the tenets of the Buddhists and Jains and also Bharadvāja, the author of the Nyāya work called the *Uddyota,* wrote their works during the period between the fifth and seventh centuries A.D.

The progress of science in this period is attested by the scientific and mathematical works of the great Indian astronomers, Āryabhaṭa (born 476 A.D.), Varāhamihira (505-587 A.D.) and Brahmagupta (born 598 A.D.). The practice of the various fine arts, specially music, architecture, sculpture and painting was extensive in this golden age. Temples of this period built of stone and bricks, discovered in whole or in parts, in different parts of the country, e.g. at Jhansi, Benares (Sarnath), Cawnpur and Paharpur (Bengal), the rock-cut caves of Ajantā with their excellent frescoes and the beautiful Buddhist images of the period indicate the perfection attained by these allied arts. The inscriptional records and the literature of the period have disclosed the existence of all kinds of artisans, artists, and craftsmen, of whom there existed various regulations of corporate industrial life. Metallurgy and coinage were two of the special features of Gupta civilisation. Foreign influence due to trade intercourse between India on the one hand, and on the other, the European countries, specially the Roman Empire in the west and China, Java and other Asiatic countries in the east, made a somewhat palpable impress on the civilised life of the people of India at that time ; and Indians then

knew how far to imitate and assimilate the excellent features in the art and culture of foreigners.

A few words on the system of provincial government during the Gupta rule, specially in North-Eastern India, will not be out of place here. We know incidentally from the edicts of Aśoka that the Mauryya[4] emperor appointed his own viceroys to rule over the large provinces in the north-west, the south, the east and the west, the central part of the empire having probably been kept under the direct rule of the emperor at Pāṭaliputra. A remarkable continuity of this policy seems to have prevailed among the rulers of India in later times, though they belonged to different dynasties. The eight earliest (North Bengal) copper-plate grants of the Gupta period known to archaeologists, six of which were deciphered and published for the first time by the present writer, reveal a most important fact of administration viz., that it was the central Government under the Gupta

[4] It may be noted here with advantage that Professor D. R. Bhandarkar of the Calcutta University announced in a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal last year the discovery (in November, 1931) of a fragmentary Mauryya inscription at Mahāsthāna in the Bogra district which conveyed an order of some ruler of the Mauryya period to a *mahāmātra* officer stationed in Puṇḍranagara for helping the famine-stricken people by advancing money and distributing paddy from the district granary. According to him, this inscription, the earliest of those so far discovered in Bengal, establishes the identity of Puṇḍranagara with Mahāsthāna, and that Bengal, at any rate North Bengal, must have been included in the Mauryya empire. Mr. N. G. Majumdar of the Archaeological Department also announced in the same meeting the recent discovery in North Bengal of three Kushān or pseudo-Kushān coins.

emperors, which used to appoint the provincial governors, who are described as being *tat-pāda-parigṛhīta* (literally, accepted by the imperial majesty's feet), and having right of use of such titles as *uparika-mahārāja*. Their position may be compared to some extent with that enjoyed by the Divisional Commissioners of modern times, if the latter could be directly responsible to the Imperial Government. The present writer remarked while editing the Damodarpur inscriptions that these provincial governors of the Gupta period had power to appoint the *vishayapatis* (district officers), who are described as *tan-niyuktas* (literally, appointed by them), and as having right of use of such titles as *kumārāmātya* or *āyukta*. But it appears from the wording of the text in the new Baigram inscription[5] that the *vishayapatis* were also sometimes appointed directly by the emperor's court, and the component word *tat* in the compound *tan-niyuktaka* may in that case refer to the emperor himself. It may however be reasonably assumed that the emperor appointed them in consultation with the *bhukti* governors, whose own appointment, however, was dirctly in the hands of the emperor. It is also a most important and interesting point that the *vishaya-patis* had their head-quarters in *adhishṭhānas* (towns), where they had their own *adhikaraṇas* (offices or courts). Another most interesting fact of adminstrative history, which was known for the first time from these North Bengal inscriptions, is that the *vishaypati* as the head of the *vishaya* was aided in his administrative work

[5] Just published in *Epi. Ind.*, Vol XXI, Pt ii.

(*saṁvyavahāra*) by a Board of Advisers, which seems to have been constituted by four members, representing the different interests of those days, viz., (1) the *nagara-śreshṭhin*, representing the various guilds or corporations of the town or the rich urban population, (2) the *sārthavāha* (the chief merchant), representing the various trade-guilds and other mercantile professions of the *vishaya*, (3) the *prathama-kulika* (the chief artisan) representing the craft-guilds and (4) the *prathama-kāyastha* (the chief scribe), representing either the *kāyasthas* as a class, or acting as a State official in the capacity of a Chief-Secretary of the present day. The same system of administration appears to have prevailed in the Tīrabhukti province and the *Vaiśālī-vishaya*, and this can be very easily gathered from the inscriptions of the innumerable stray clay-seals belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., discovered during the excavations[6] at Basarh (old Vaiśālī in Tirhut). These have revealed to us the designations of some of the important State functionaries of the Gupta period. We read of both a *vishaya* and an *adhishṭhāna* of the name of Vaiśālī. The legend on the Basarh seal (No. 25), viz., *Vaiśālyadhishṭhānādhikaraṇa* referring to the court (or office or department) of the *vishyādhipati* in the town of Vaiśālī, can be very well compared with the legend on the seal of Damodarpur plate (No. 5) viz., *Koṭivarshādhishṭhānādhikaraṇa*, referring to the court at the headquarters of Koṭivarsha. We have no doubt that the *Kumārāmātyādhikaraṇa* and the *uparikādhikaraṇa* men-

6 *Archaeological Survey Report*, 1903-4, (Government of India).

tioned in some of these Basarh seals, refer to the court of the *vishayapati* of Tīra (town) and the governor of Tīrabhukti respectively. The word *adhikarṇa* used with the word *kumārāmātya* or such other words cannot mean "the chief", as the learned writer of the *Archaeological Survey Report* (1903-4) wrongly thinks. Tīrabhukti was at first probably under the direct administrative jurisdiction of the emperor (Chandragupta II) who had under him a *vishayapati*, and it was to the latter's office or court that the legend on some of the seals, standing thus *Śrī-parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pādīya-kumārāmātyādhikaraṇa* (Seal No. 6), is to be referred. But when *mahārāja* Govinadgupta (as *yuvarāja*) was appointed by the monarch to act as the Governor of Tīrabhukti, presumably with the title *uparika* (Cf. the legend *Tīrabhuktyuparikādhikaraṇasya* on seal No. 20), the office or court of the *vishayapati* working under him must have been named *Yuvarāja-(or, yuvarāja-bhaṭṭāraka)-pādīya-kumārāmātyādhikaraṇa* (Cf. seals on Nos. 4 and 6). When an empire expands through gradual territorial aggrandizement, it becomes impossible for the emperor to rule it directly with the help of the central executive alone, and therefore the outlying provinces are constituted into different units or divisions, for administrative purposes, presided over by princes or governors appointed by him. The success of the Magadhan government under the Mauryyas was undoubtedly due to the prevalence of a perfectly trained machinery of administration—almost a veritable form of modern bureaucracy —which included a hierarchy of different kinds of officers, under the title *adhyaksha*, both civil and

military. This is clear from the pages of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. The policy of maintaining such a constitution with necessary modifications, according to circumstances, was continued by the Gupta emperors and their successors, in all parts of India, specially in the North-Eastern provinces, such as Sāketa, Magadha, Old Bengal (including Karṇasuvarṇa—Puṇḍravardhana, and Vaṅga-Samataṭa), Orissa, Kāmarūpa and Nepal. In some of the Basarh seals, as in the inscriptions of the Gupta and post-Gupta period, we have reference to certain other administrative departments, such as *balādhikaraṇa* (Army office), *raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa* (Department of munition or military stores), *daṇḍapāśikādhikaraṇa* (Police Department), *vinaya-sthiti-sthāpakādhikaraṇa* (the Department of the minister of Law and Order, or of the Superintendent of the moral conduct of the people, as some may translate the word). It seems that Vaiśālī was a large trading centre, as is clear from the occurrence on a large number of seals, of the names of some individual *kulikas* and *śreshṭhins*, as well as from that of such legends, as *śreshṭhi-sārthavāha-kulika-nigama* (seal No. 29), which certainly refer to some corporate bodies of bankers, traders and artisans existing in the town. There seems to be no doubt that they were represented in the Board of Advisers of the *vishayapatis* at Vaiśālī, as in the Koṭivarsha *vishaya* in North Bengal. Names also occur in some of the Basarh seals of persons holding the high offices of the *mahāpratīhāra* (the Chief door-keeper, perhaps the chief of the palace Police), the *daṇḍanāyaka* (the administrator of justice),

and the *bhaṭāśvapati* (master of infantry and cavalry). Another high State-officer, reference to whom is frequently found in early inscriptions, is the *sāndhi-vigrahika* (the Minister of Peace and War). The existence of village *pañchāyet* committees (cf. the term *Parishad* at Udānakūpa in one of the Basarh seals) can be proved from some of the records of the Gupta period in India, and of a somewhat later period in Nepal.

Another class of local officers, found mentioned in the North and East Bengal plates of the Gupta and post-Gupta period, are the *pustapālas* (the Government record-keepers), who, it seems, were possessed of the knowledge of the title to all lands. The Goverment would sanction land-sales only after these record-keepers had, on receipt of applications from the *bonafide* purchasers, determined the title to the land under proposal of transfer, and sent in their report to Government. Other important bodies, presumably rural, are also mentioned in old epigraphic records of the period, viz. the *mahāttaras* (the leading men of the villages), *ashṭakulādhikaraṇas* (probably small departments having supervising authority over eight *kulas*, which may mean either the particular divisions of land of the same name, or families), and *grāmikas* (the heads of villages who had the special privilege of using a portion of the king's dues and the right to refer criminal offences to the heads of groups of ten villages). These officers were often consulted by Government in making arrangement for land-transfer and inspection of the execution of the transaction.

There is evidence to show that there prevailed different rates in different parts of Bengal during the period discussed, in the valuation of the price of unsettled and untilled *khila* (fallow) land and *vāstu* (home-stead land). In the province of Puṇḍra-vardhana, we find that such land was sold by Government, in some places at the rate of two *dīnāras* for each *kulyavāpa* area, and in others three *dīnāras*; but in East Bengal it was sold at four such coins for the same area. We meet with the name of the coin *rūpaka* (silver coin) in the newly discovered Baigram copper-plate grant ; and we have clearly shown in our article in the *Epigraphia Indica* that the relative value of this silver coin as compared with the gold *dīnāra* is 1 to 16, i.e. one gold *dīnāra* or *suvarṇa* is equal to 16 *rūpakas*.

After the downfall of the imperial Guptas, Northern India suffered again from social and religious disorder, when the orthodox Brāhmanic culture and cults received a set-back, probably due to the spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which now embraced within itself a pantheon of deities almost Brāhmanic in form, and to the gradual political darkness prevailing in many parts of the country, on account of fresh oppression by the Hūṇas and other outlandish tribes. During the next two centuries we find the people of North-Eastern India enjoying State aid in the restoration of Vedic rites, and sacrifices, and the worship of several additional Brāhmanic gods and goddesses was newly ordained. Hence it is easy to explain why some of the Maukhari rulers, some members of the Śailodbhava dynasty of Orissa and some of the

Varman kings of Kāmarūpa are described, in their records, as the upholders of *varṇāśramadharma.* It may be remembered in this connection with what devotion the Nepal kings performed the phallic worship during this period.

All the special economic, social, political and religious features that marked the Gupta period were preserved, with slight modifications, here and there, by the kings and people of the next two centuries in all the North-Eastern provinces. It is indeed curious that, generally speaking, a unity of Hindu culture and civilisation was maintained almost unmodified throughout the period under our notice.

The typical Hindu village community in the North-Eastern part of India is even to-day self-contained, in the sense that we find therein the same village-heads, the same agriculturist house-holders, the same hired labourers, the religious establishments under the same priests, and a whole host of artisans of various classes, carrying on their age-long functions for the common good. It seems as if a constant cultural and religious unity amongst the Brāhmanic Hindus, which was so palpably evident during the Gupta and the post-Gupta period of North-Eastern India, noticed in the above chapters, has been retained intact, though with certain modifications, down to the present day, while we are under the rule of the British Crown.

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CORRIGENDA

Page	Line	*For*	*Read*
5	17	"*Śrīguptsya*"	"*Śrīguptasya*".
14	1	Chandrvarman	Chandravarman.
28	14	Muthurā	Mathurā.
32	6	Sumadragupta	Samudragupta.
58	17	Prof. K. P. Pathak	Prof. K. B. Pathak.
64	3	Bhitari pillar pillar	Bhitari pillar.
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184	11	Vishṇavas	Vaishṇavas.
196	12	*adhimahāhārāja*	*adhimahārāja*.
197	28	esteemed	be esteemed.
200	17	peoble	people.
213	7	betwee	between.
220	27	prase	phrase.
223	25	acquiscence	acquiescence.
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235	1	differcnt	different.
245	26	[Vikrma-]	[Vikrama-].
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